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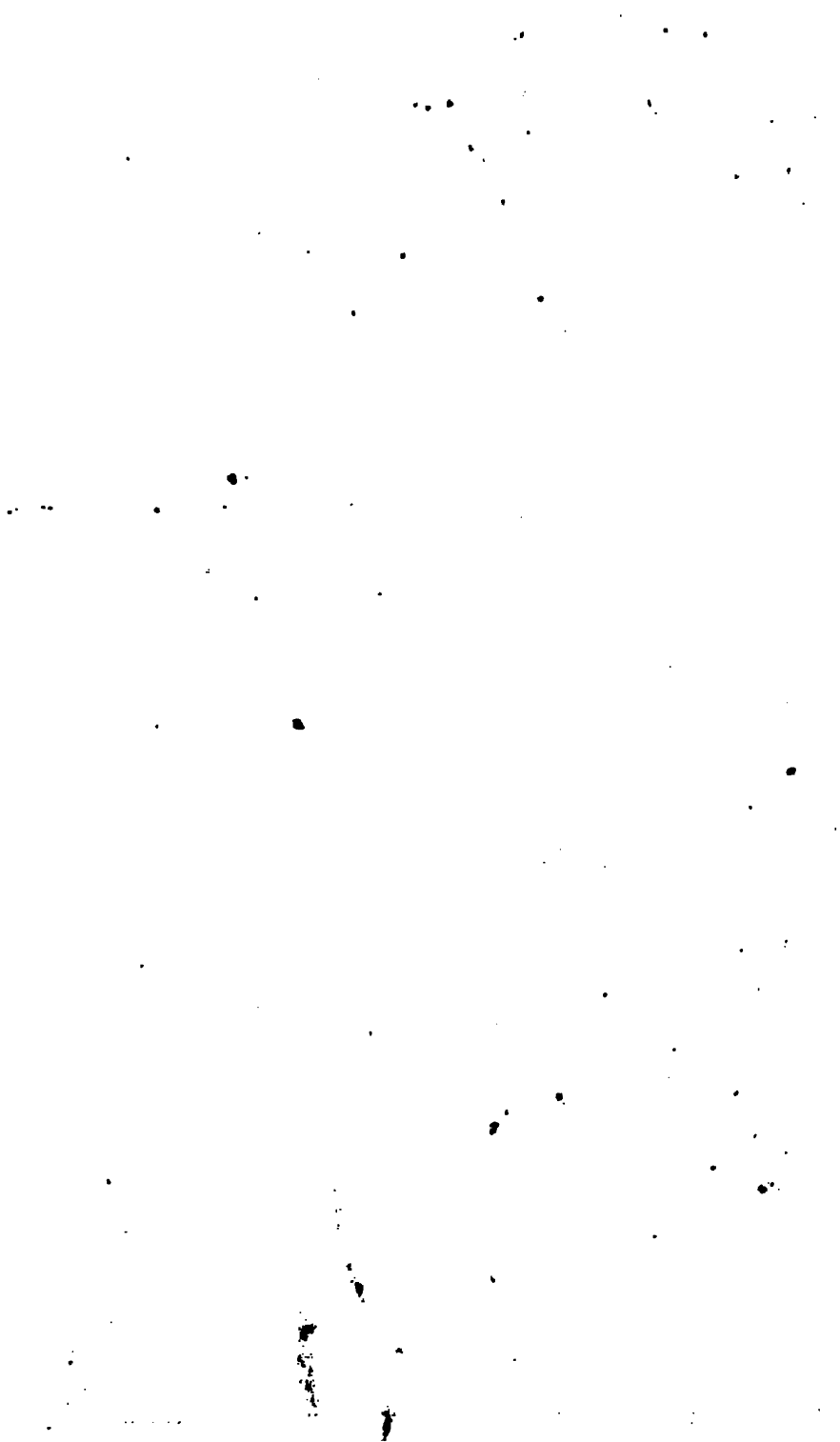
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Louis Huard, del.

MISS ST. ALBANS.

W. L. Thomas, sc.





BELGRAVIA

A LONDON MAGAZINE

CONDUCTED BY

M. E. BRADDON

AUTHOR OF "LADY AUDLEY'S SECRET," "AURORA FLOYD," ETC. ETC.

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BELGRAVIA

NOVEMBER 1867

DEAD-SEA FRUIT

J. Nobel

BY THE AUTHOR OF "LADY AUDLEY'S SECRET," ETC.

CHAP. XII. THE GREEN-EYED MONSTER

MRS. JERNINGHAM spent her autumn at Spa, where Mrs. Colton, the amiable dragon, drank the waters with the patient regularity of a valetudinarian, and wondered at the continental toilettes with the pious wonder of a well-bred provincial Englishwoman, to whom these daring eccentricities of costume—these *bottes à mi-jambe, en cuir de Russie*, these dainty braided jackets *à la Rigolboche*, these robes *à queue-sans-fin*, and *chapeaux à l'infiniment petit*—were all so much confusion, the climax of horror and infamy foreshadowed by the Prophet, the abomination of desolation sitting in the high places.

For Emily Jerningham, life at Spa seemed a very dull business. She had no pet ailment to be subjugated by the mineral waters. The pine-woods and stately avenues were very beautiful on fine summer mornings, or beneath the broad glory of the harvest moon; but she had seen them before. It seemed to her as if she knew every pine on the steep hill-side, every branch of the lofty oaks in the valley, every hard, worldly face that was to be seen in the Kursaal. Was there not something wanting in her life, a something for lack of which she must needs be lonely and purposeless wherever she went?

All the pleasures and luxuries that wealth can buy; all the consideration that a good old name can exact; all the respect that a reputation which, despite an occasional shrug from some Rochefoucauld of this generation, may fairly be called stainless, can command—were at the disposal of this fortunate lady, and yet she was not happy. She had too much, and too little. If she had been an utterly selfish and narrow-minded woman, she might have found the perfection of bliss in splendid toilets and well-appointed equipages, an elegant house and

distinguished acquaintance; but something more than these was necessary to complete the sum of Mrs. Jerningham's happiness.

"Of what use am I in the world?" she asked herself wearily, as she drove her graceful pony-carriage through the crowd which admired and envied her. "I am an expense to my husband; a burden and a restraint for Laurence, who no doubt would have married before this, if it were not for me; and a weariness to myself."

Perhaps this unspoken lament might have been translated thus:

"I have been here a month, and Mr. Desmond has not found time to come to me. He writes me a hurried letter once in ten days, in which, under an unlimited amount of respect, I perceive the lurking poison of indifference; and I am too proud to tell him how intensely I wish to see him, too proud to confess even to myself the pain I suffer because of his absence."

In bidding adieu to Mrs. Jerningham and her companion at the London-bridge station on the morning of their departure, the editor of the *Pallas* had declared that if he could give himself a holiday, he would take that holiday at Spa; and the eyes of the younger lady had said "Do!" and the proud line of the younger lady's lips had softened into a grateful smile.

"We shall expect to see you, Mr. Desmond," she said at the very last, when he had brought her *Punch* and a damp copy of the newly-issued *Pallas*. Ah, how many a youthful scribbler's ardour had been damped by those cold clammy papers, deadly chill as the skin of the cobra, and venomous as his sting!

"We shall expect to see you—soon," repeated the lady, with that pretty air of insistence which is so charming in an elegant woman.

"But, my dear Mrs. Jerningham, I did not say I would come. I said, I will come if I can get a holiday."

"As if anyone could refuse you a holiday! But I will not allow the arrangement to be left in that vague manner. Shall we see you in a week?"

"I fear not."

"In a fortnight?"

"I scarcely like to promise anything till this month is over. There are so many rows on the political *tapis*; and we are bound to go in for an analysis of all the rows. And there is Cumberland's fourteenth volume of *Catharine II.*: that is a book I am pledged to review myself."

"Pledged to the author?"

"No; to the publisher. Do you think anyone on the *Pallas* ever writes a review to oblige an author? I think in three weeks I may be free; and if—"

"O, pray do not imperil the fortunes of the *Pallas* for any caprice of mine. I am sure I should be immensely distressed if my pleasure interfered with the prompt notice of Mr. Cumberland's *Catharine*,"

cried Mrs. Jerningham, with supreme hauteur, and with the injured air of a woman who thinks your regard for her must be very small, if at her behest you refuse to jeopardise a paltry newspaper which cost only twenty thousand pounds or so to establish, or the reputation of a trumpery author, who has only given the labour of a lifetime to his absurd book.

The Dover express moved away before Mr. Desmond could reply to the lady's angry speech, and left him standing on the platform with a smile that was half-sad, half-cynical, upon his face.

"They are all alike," he said to himself; "beautiful, delightful, unreasonable, and profoundly selfish. How well that tone of *grande dame* becomes her! How lovely she looked just now with that crimson flush of wounded pride, and that angry light in her eyes! What a pity it is that a woman cannot believe in the regard of a man who is not ready to behave like an idiot in all the affairs of life for her pleasure! 'You pretend that you love me,' cries offended Beauty, 'and yet you won't forfeit a colonelcy in the Lifeguards in order to attend me to a garden-party at Miss Burdett Coutts's! You declare that you adore me, and yet refuse to make a bonfire of your father's family-seat for my amusement!'"

Mr. Desmond's mind was not altogether in his work that day, and more than once the remorseless pen of the editor lay idle in his hand while he pondered on a subject which within the last year had become the unanswerable enigma of his existence. It was much easier for him to soothe Emily's doubts with pretty, reassuring speeches than to satisfy the perplexities of his own mind.

Was this lukewarm friendship an alliance that good men and pure-minded women could approve—this friendship which must needs be continually measured by the thermometer of the proprieties, lest it should become a degree or so warmer than society could warrant? Was it a fair and honourable thing, this tacit engagement, the fulfilment whereof was contingent on the death of a man whose hand Laurence had taken in friendship many times in the past, whom he might meet with friendly greeting to-morrow? No, a thousand times no! Laurence Desmond was well aware that he occupied one of those false positions into which men sometimes slip unawares, and from which extrication is so difficult.

Could he bring himself to tell Emily Jerningham that this friendship was wrong, and that it lacked even the charm that sweetens some wrongdoing? Could he do this, could he inflict pain upon her, when his own conscience told him that the keen sense of the dishonour involved in his position had only arisen in his mind since the position itself had become wearisome to him?

Yes, this was the *mot de l'énigme*. He had loved her very dearly; but he loved her no longer. He looked backward to the days in which he had walked with her in the little garden at Passy, and thought how

happy they might both have been if he had been less prudent, if he had obeyed the impulses of his heart, instead of the hard axioms of the worldly wise. The time and the opportunity were past and gone, and he felt that some part of his own youth and hope had gone with them.

He made his appearance at Spa when Mrs. Jerningham and Mrs. Colton had been at that pleasant watering-place for more than a month, and he was received somewhat coldly by the younger lady, who could not forgive him for doing his duty as editor of the *Pallas*. But she soon melted. It was not possible that she should long conceal the delight she felt in his presence.

"I am angry with myself for being so glad to see you," she cried at last; "but, O, you cannot imagine how dull and hopeless my life has been in this place! My poor aunt likes the humdrum gaiety, and the nauseous waters, and the dawdling drives, and the Tauchnitz novels; and I have stayed to please her. But more than once I have been tempted to take the train for Liège, and offer myself as a novice at the first convent I came to after leaving the station. Why should I not go into a convent, or at least a *béguinage*? What use am I in the world?"

Hereupon Mr. Desmond had to reiterate the old protestations, to the effect that the lady's friendship was the pride and the happiness of his life, and that to him, at least, she was a person of supreme importance—the very pole-star, or guiding influence, of his life; and then, after speaking to her with great warmth and kindness, he began to lecture her a little upon the emptiness of her existence.

"You would not be so foolish as to imagine these things if you were more employed, Emily," he said.

"How shall I employ myself?" asked the lady, with an incredulous laugh. "Shall I tat? The tatting of our great-grandmothers has come into fashion. I have tried it, and for a little while it seemed really delightful; but there is a time when one gets tired even of that. I have worked screens in Berlin wool with beads, or have begun them; my aunt has a knack of finishing my work. I paint ever so little in water-colours; but after sitting in a damp meadow for two or three hours exposed to a midsummer sun, the result is only that I hate myself because I am not Creswick. And with music it is the same. The morning-concerts spoil one for amateur music. I devoted last summer to the harmonium—I suppose because there is such a rage for it; but it was like the tatting—there came a stage at which it seemed all weariness. If it were not for my orchids, I think I should go melancholy mad; but for the cultivator of orchids there can be no such thing as satiety until all the forests on the shores of the Amazon have been rifled by exploring botanists."

"Don't you think it just possible you might find a better source of interest even than orchids?" suggested the editor gravely. "Your

fellow-creatures, for instance—a little sympathy for them might not be thrown away.”

“You mean that I should turn district-visitor, and go about with tracts and packets of tea and sugar,” replied the lady listlessly. “My aunt does all that. She is a clergyman’s widow, you know, and that kind of thing is very easy to her. My maid goes with her sometimes, and tells me dreadful things about the poor people as she brushes my hair—the St. Anthony’s fires and St. Vitus’s dances, and wens and whitlows, and frightful complaints that they suffer from; and really there seems a particular class of diseases that poor people have entirely to themselves, just as if they had a copyright in them, you know. I am sure I am very sorry for the poor creatures; and when there is anything out of the common way, we send money; besides which our rector knows that my check-book is at his service in any emergency. I cannot see that I should do any particular good by walking about in the hot sun with tracts.”

“I daresay, so far as your own parish goes, you and your aunt are ministering angels, my dear Emily; but you see that is a very narrow sphere, and there are people of a higher class than that of those you help who may have more need of your sympathy.”

“If you are going to ask me to be philanthropic, I warn you at once that it is useless,” exclaimed the lady, with a little cry of alarm. “I have not the elements of the philanthropist. I do not care the least in the world for woman’s rights; and if I had the privilege of an electress to-morrow, I should—what do you call it?—plump unblushingly for the man who could offer me a new orchid. I do not care about female printers or female doctors. I think it very sad that poor seamstresses should work in stuffy rooms until they fade and die; but I can only pity them, and send money to the newspapers for them, or for their survivors. I have not strength of mind enough to be of any practical use to them.”

Mr. Desmond sighed. He saw no remedy for the weariness of spirit from which Mrs. Jerningham suffered. Did not Madame de Maintenon complain of a like weariness when she was the envied of all French men and women, thereby drawing upon herself a trenchant and somewhat impious remark from her brother d’Aubigné? She was happier, perhaps, in the old days, before Scarron pitied and married her—the days in which she did or did not share the chamber of Ninon de l’Enclos.

“I do not ask you to take up the human race,” said Mr. Desmond after a pause; “but I think your life is too—pardon me if I say egotistical. If you had more friends—I don’t mean visitors; you have plenty of them,—but intimate acquaintance—intimate enough to fly to you in their perplexities, to consult you in their social arrangements, and to—”

“They would only bore me.”

“Perhaps; but they would occupy you, they would take you out

of yourself; and even when they were dullest and most obnoxious, they would give a keener zest to your hours of solitude. Depend upon it, one must consent to be bored now and then, in order to appreciate the rapture of not being bored. I am sure, Emily, you would be happier if you took a little more interest in the affairs of your neighbour, or if you had more people dependent on your kindness."

"You may be right," returned the lady listlessly; "but I do not care for my neighbours. I cannot bring myself to sympathise with their serio-comic woes about recalcitrant butlers and flaunting housemaids. Nor have I any dependents whom my kindness could benefit. My father and I were the only poor members of the family, and there is no one who would care to profit by my prosperity."

What could be said after this? Laurence Desmond felt that this lonely lady's life wanted a something that gives form and purpose to the lives of other women. Existence for Emily Jerningham had been made too easy, and, extremes meeting in this as in all other cases, it was fast becoming difficult. She was like some dowager sultana wearied of palace and gardens, fountains and slaves, peacocks and birds-of-paradise. All the ease and luxury of her life palled on her, and that most fatal of moral diseases, discontent, was fast gaining a hold upon her mind. That old story of the greedy apprentice in the pastrycook's shop is a fable of wide application. The boy fancies he can never be weary of an existence that is all raspberry-tarts and bath-buns; and being let loose in his master's shop, makes himself bilious in a week, and hates the sight of a raspberry-tart ever afterwards.

There had been a time when Miss Jerningham, sadly restricted in all the aspirations of young-ladyhood, had believed that an open account with a West-end milliner, a perfectly-appointed barouche for the Park, and a miniature brougham for shopping, must constitute the supreme good of earthly existence; but after half-a-dozen years' enjoyment of these blessings, she discovered that the most accomplished of milliners, and the most perfect of establishments, cannot give happiness. The toy villa at Hampton was a place to dream of; but its mistress found the hours intolerably long in those paradisaic gardens, the evenings unutterably weary in that fairy drawing-room, the drives by Bushey and Richmond, Kingston and Chertsey, very little gayer than the prisoner's tramp in the grim gaol-yard, under surveillance of a hard-visaged warder.

The lady had nothing to do. If she read a volume of a novel, and paid a few visits, or received a few callers, today, she could only look forward to another volume, and another visit, or visitor, tomorrow. The days were all alike, and they left no mark behind them. When a year came to an end, Mrs. Jerningham told herself that she was twelve months older than when it began, and that was the sole effect the passage of time could exercise upon her fate.

"It is all very well for Laurence to be happy and active," she said

to herself. "He has that odious *Pallas* to interest him, and the hope of going into parliament by and by. He is getting rich, and has had the excitement of earning his money. He has his social triumphs and his literary successes, the friendship of great men. It is always the same story. *They* have 'the court, camp, church; the vessel and the mart; sword, gown, gain, glory;' and we have only the London Library and Jaques's croquet."

Mr. Desmond stayed a fortnight at Spa, and then hurried back to the British Isles, being "due" at a ducal palace in the Highlands—a grand old château, romantic as a picture by Gustave Doré. To say that he assured Mrs. Jerningham he had not the faintest expectation of deriving pleasure from this visit, and that he went to Scotland simply because the political interests of the *Pallas* obliged him to stalk the duke's deer and shoot the duke's eagles, is only to say that he was a *man*.

Within a week from his departure Mrs. Jerningham and her companion also turned their backs upon the romantic Belgian valley. Emily would have liked much to make the return journey under the escort of the editor; but this was a proceeding which would have just a little outstepped the bounds of this carefully-regulated friendship, and Mr. Desmond was too profoundly versed in the philosophy of his own world to suggest the measure. He knew exactly how much would be permitted to himself and the woman he—had loved, and still hoped to marry; and he adhered closely to the letter of that unwritten law which is Society's Koran.

When autumn was fast fading into the chill gray of early winter, Mr. Desmond came back to town, and resumed his visits at the Hampton villa, where his pleasure and his caprices were studied with affectionate solicitude, but where a good deal was exacted from him in return for this solicitude. If Mrs. Jerningham for her part paid a certain price for Laurence Desmond's friendship, so surely did he for his part pay somewhat heavily for the honour and privilege of the lady's regard.

In plain English, she was jealous. The agony which neither "mandragora nor all the drowsy syrups of the East" can lull to rest was the agony that racked the soul of Emily Jerningham. Little wonder that the pleasures and luxuries of her life palled upon her. There was a poison in her cup which flavoured every joy and embittered every pleasure. All the petty doubts and frivolous misgivings of the jealous mind harassed this lady's quiet days, and tormented her through the slow hours of her wakeful nights. She was miserable when Laurence Desmond was away from her; she was restless and anxious when he was with her. If he were grave, she fancied him bored by her society; if he were especially gay, her demon familiar suggested that his gaiety might be assumed. She tortured him by her eager curiosity about the manner in which his life was spent when he was away from her. She

insulted him by the air of incredulity with which she received his answers. The mention of some beautiful or distinguished woman whom he had met in society sufficed to fan the flame that was always burning.

"Why do you pretend not to admire Laura Courtenay, and why do you give your shoulders that depreciating shrug when you talk of Lady Sylvester?" she would exclaim with suppressed anger. "Do you think I am deceived by that kind of thing? You dined at the Sylvesters' four times last season; and you are always dancing attendance upon those Courtenay girls, though you make quite a favour of coming here once a week. I shall ask Laura and Julia Courtenay to stay with me next summer; and then perhaps I shall be honoured by your society."

Of course Mr. Desmond did his uttermost to satisfy the lady's doubts and cheer her spirits; but he found it not a little wearisome to repeat the same protestations, the same assurances, week after week, to very small effect.

"If I could see Emily contented and happy," he said to himself, "I should be the last to count the cost of our friendship; but her tears and misgivings and accusations harass and worry me almost beyond endurance."

Nor did Mr. Desmond feel thus without justification. The lady's jealousy might, indeed, be the strongest possible evidence of her affection; but it was an evidence which Laurence Desmond could have gladly dispensed with.

"Surely there must be within the limits of possibility a love that means peace, trust, unselfishness. Is every woman like Emily, exacting, suspicious, insatiable of devotion and protestation, for ever on the watch to discover falsehood and hypocrisy in the man who loves her? Poor girl, I am hard and cruel perhaps, when I blame her. These doubts and suspicions may be some of the penalties of our position. There can be no true union of hearts where there is a separation of existences. It is all very well to talk sentimental balderdash about the union of souls, the sympathy of minds that think alike, the sighs that are wafted from Indus to the Pole; but, in spite of poetry and metaphysics, real union means the family breakfast-table, the daily dinner, the constitutional walk, the drowsy home-evening when there are no visitors, the summer trip to Switzerland, the quiet half-tearful talk in the big darkened bedroom when first the faint squeal of babyhood is heard in the family mansion. Out upon platonic friendship between men and women who have once knelt together at the shrine of Venus! It is a delusion, a mockery, a lie! There is no union except marriage."

This was the shape which Mr. Desmond's reflections were wont to assume after a painful interview with Emily Jerningham. She loved him, and she would fain have believed in his love, but her

familiar demon would not allow her so much peace, such pure delight. If the editor of the *Pallas* succeeded in convincing her of his truth and devotion to-night, and left her at the gate of her pretty garden smiling and happy, after a cordial pressure of her soft white hand, it was as likely as not that an hour's solitary promenade and contemplation in the same pretty garden would enable the lady to develop new doubts and misgivings from her inner consciousness, which would result in a melancholy letter of five or six pages, written that night, and delivered next morning at Mr. Desmond's late breakfast.

Those who knew the editor of the *Pallas*, and knew or guessed his position *auprès de* Mrs. Jerningham, envied and hated him as the most fortunate of literary highflyers. What more could he desire? Had he not the regard of one of the handsomest and best-bred women in London, who would in all probability come in for a princely fortune whenever Jerningham should go off the hooks? Mr. Desmond was the last of men to admit the pinching of the shoe which he wore with so good a grace. No one among his intimates ventured the impertinence of a congratulation; but it was a generally understood thing that he was supremely happy, and that Mrs. Jerningham's friendship was a blessing which he would not have bartered for a kingdom. And while his friends were permitted to suppose this, Laurence Desmond was profoundly miserable.

"How will it end?" he asked himself sometimes; "and will it ever end?"

CHAPTER XIII.

MISS ST. ALBANS.

As an individual who, by arduous and unremitting labour, by the sweat of his brow and the ceaseless working of his brain, had contrived to secure for himself a decent income in the present and a moderate provision for the future, Mr. Desmond was of course a fitting mark for the arrows of that free-lance of modern civilisation—the begging-letter writer. Men and women whose faces he had never seen wrote him pitiful letters, or impudent letters, as the case might be, urging requests which, if all or even half of them had been granted, would speedily have left him penniless. That he should have those of his own kith or kin, that he should have personal friends, or benefactors of the past with powerful claims upon him in the present, that he should have obligations to discharge, or debts to pay, or artistic tastes to gratify, never entered the heads of these poor needy people. His name and address were in the Directory, and he was supposed to be tolerably well off; so there was no more to do but to procure a sheet of paper and a penny stamp, and entreat of him

the loan or donation of any given number of pounds, from five to a hundred.

These applications were as painful to Mr. Desmond as such applications must always be to a man who has power to feel the extent of human want and wretchedness around and about him without the power to relieve it. He read the piteous letters with a sigh, and passed them over to his sub-editor, who answered every appeal with the same polite formula. Laurence Desmond was not a hard man, however, and to an appeal that came from an old friend or fellow-worker he never turned a deaf ear.

Such an appeal came to him one dull wintry morning after his return from the ducal château in Scotland. Among his letters there was a very painful one from Mrs. Jerningham, with the usual jealous murmurs, the oft-repeated complaints of neglect. This he read with a thoughtful brow, and laid aside with a sigh so heavy as to be almost a groan.

"I am tired of protestation and justification," he said to himself; "there must be an end of these letters. If she doubts my truth because I spend half-a-dozen days without going to her, she can have little power to appreciate the unselfishness of my regard in the three long years in which I have made myself her slave. There must come an end to a bondage that is intolerable to me, and only a source of unhappiness to her."

The rest of Mr. Desmond's letters, with one exception, were on business connected with his journal. This one exception was a letter addressed in a hand that was very familiar to him.

"My old coach, Tristram Alford!" he cried, as he tore open the envelope. "I wonder how the poor fellow has been getting on since the old days at Henley, when Max Waldon, Frank Lawsley, and I were there with our boat, reading for 'Greats.' I suppose he has been writing a book, or doing a translation of a Greek tragedy, and wants me to give him a lift. It's a long time since I've heard anything of him."

This was the tutor's letter :

"MY DEAR DESMOND,—If I had not already tested and proved the goodness of your heart when I appealed to you some three or four years since for a loan,—which I then hoped would have been of a temporary character, but which, I regret to remember, has not yet been liquidated,—I should not now venture to address you as a suppliant.

"The favour which I am now about to ask is not of a pecuniary kind, and it is a favour which will be very easy to you to grant. You remember my little girl Lucy, who was so fond of your dogs and boats, and who used to sit listening with open eyes and mouth when we were construing Sophocles. The little rogue had an innate love of the drama, and performed the part of Electra with a metal tea-pot in a most affect-

ing manner. Well, my dear boy, that inborn dramatic taste which showed itself when the child was in pinafores has grown with her growth ; and when old enough to consider the question of getting her own living,—the generous-minded child being sensitively averse from remaining a burden to me,—she decided on becoming an actress.

“I need scarcely inform you, my dear Desmond, that such an idea was to me, at the first blush, absolute HORROR ; but when my sweet girl urged her predilection for the drama, and reminded me of the handsome fortunes realised by Garrick, Mrs. Siddons, Miss O’Neil, and other professors of that classic art, I relented, and allowed Lucy to have her own way. The dear girl had educated herself and reared herself, as it were, with so little help from me, that it would have seemed ill in me to frustrate her hopes by my cold reasoning or timid doubts. Nor had I any very agreeable alternative to offer her. My circumstances have year by year become more embarrassed since that pleasant summer we spent together at Henley, and the home which I can provide for my only child is of the poorest. Was I, then, to stand in the way of her advancement ?

“To make a long story short, I yielded, and have since that time devoted my best energies to my dear girl’s service. She is but nineteen, and has already appeared at the Theatres Royal Stony Stratford, Market Deeping, Oswestry, and Stamford, with considerable success. Her sympathies are with the buskin rather than with the sock ; but at Oswestry she performed the part of Lady Teazle, and received much applause from an appreciative although somewhat limited audience.

“We have now essayed a bolder venture. My Lucy has obtained, with inordinate difficulty, a London engagement. I had, in my ignorance of the dramatic world, fondly imagined that a young person of unmis-takable genius had only to apply to the manager of one of the patent theatres in order to be placed at once upon the boards that Siddons trod. But I find, alas, that in most cases it is only after years of patient and ill-paid drudgery in small provincial towns the dramatic aspirant works his or her way to the metropolis,—nay indeed, there are many who never reach that splendid goal, but who journey through life as the favourite actor of the Theatre Royal Market Deeping or Oswestry, and who are not ill-pleased with their renown.

“But to return. My daughter’s engagement will be a brief one ; but she is to appear in a wide range of the drama, in conjunction with Mr. Henry de Mortemar, a gentleman of some local celebrity, though as yet unknown to the metropolitan critics. The theatre is an obscure one, and Lucy must speedily return to the drudgery of a provincial stage unless some powerful and friendly hand shall be interposed in her behalf. Yours, my good friend, is the influence which I would solicit for my dear child. A word from you would doubtless immediately secure a profitable engagement at one of the West-end theatres. I beseech you, for the sake of ‘auld lang syne,’ to say that

all-powerful word, and to confer a lasting obligation on your poor old friend and tutor,

TRISTRAM ALFORD.

Paul's-terrace, Islington, Nov. 14, 186—"

"Poor Alford!" murmured the editor, somewhat touched by the earnestness of this appeal. "So he has allowed his daughter to go on the stage, and cherishes the fond delusion that she must needs be a Siddons or an O'Neil, because she has a childish fancy for gas-lamps and spangled petticoats. Yes, I remember the little girl—an angular chit in brown holland; a nice little girl I think she was, with pretty dreamy blue eyes and shy childish ways, but an embryo blue-stocking nevertheless. I have a faint recollection of her playing at Electra with the tea-pot one night, when she did not know that Waldon and I were looking at her. Well, I'll do all I can. The West-end managers are *tant soit peu difficile* nowadays; but as the *Pallas* comes down rather savagely upon the modern drama and its professors now and then, they may strain a point to oblige me. I suppose the most friendly way of going to work would be to call on poor Alford."

When his morning's work was over, Mr. Desmond took a hansom from the nearest stand, and rattled up to the topmost heights of Islington, where, after considerable difficulty and aggravating waste of time, the cabman found Paul's-terrace, a shabby little row of newly-built houses on the road to Ball's-pond. The tutor, whom Mr. Desmond remembered the occupant of a pretty cottage near Henley, must indeed have fallen upon evil fortunes.

"Mr. Halford 'ave jest stepped hout," said a grimy-looking servant-girl who opened the door; "but he won't be gone long, sir, which Miss Sent Halbans is in the parlour. P'r'aps you'd like to wait?"

"Well, yes, I think I had better wait," replied the editor, disinclined to sacrifice his afternoon without benefit to his old friend.

The girl opened a door, and admitted Mr. Desmond into a very small parlour, powerfully perfumed with stale tobacco, and occupied by a young lady who was standing by the window with a little book in her hand.

This must of course be the Miss St. Albans of whom the servant had spoken,—a visitor, or hanger-on of the old tutor, perhaps. Laurence Desmond wondered how Mr. Alford came to burden himself with a visitor, and how the visitor came by so fine a name.

Miss St. Albans was a fair-haired young lady, with a slight girlish figure, and one of those faces which some people call "sweetly pretty," and some only "interesting,"—a tender, winning countenance, with soft blue eyes and lovely mouth, but without the splendour of complexion and feature which attract universal admiration and secure immediate attention. Nor was this young lady's appearance rendered striking by the art of milliner or mantua-maker. Upon her person, as when she occurred, poverty had set its stamp. She wore a

brown-merino dress that had seen much service, and her head-dress was of the most unsophisticated order, consisting only of a small forest of curl-papers.

Mr. Desmond wondered to behold this exploded style of head-gear, and wondered still more at the manner of the young person, who started and blushed at sight of him, and then came towards him with a certain hesitation and timidity that were not unpleasing.

"Mr. Desmond, I think," she faltered.

"Yes, my name is Desmond."

"Ah," murmured the damsel in curl-papers somewhat regretfully, "I see you have quite forgotten me."

"Forgotten you! I don't think that could have been possible, if I had ever had the honour to know you, Miss St. Albans," replied the editor, smiling very kindly; for there was something in the girl's candid and yet modest demeanour which pleased this *blasé habitué* of West-end drawing-rooms.

"If you had ever known me!" cried the young lady reproachfully. "Then you have quite forgotten Henley, and our boat, and Champion the Scotch terrier, and—"

"Not at all. I have a lively recollection of Henley and of Champion; but I cannot recall the name of St. Albans."

"Ah, no, I forgot that the name is strange to you. But I must be very much altered since those happy days, or you would scarcely have forgotten Lucy."

"Lucy—Lucy Alford!"

"Yes, Mr. Desmond. The Lucy to whom you used to be so kind."

"Was I kind? You are very good to think so. And you are really Miss Alford, my dear old tutor's daughter? Let me shake hands in token of our renewed friendship. Yes, I have a vague recollection of a very nice little girl, who had the prettiest blue eyes, and wore the cleanest holland pinafores in Christendom; and I am quite charmed to behold the same young lady now she has outgrown the pinafores, but not the eyes."

"You have only a vague recollection of me; and I knew you directly you stepped out of the cab," said the girl in a tone of disappointment.

"Yes, but you are more changed than I, Miss Alford. You must consider what a gulf there is between seven and nineteen; while there is not much outward difference between twenty and thirty-two. Thirty-two is only a little dustier, and grayer, and shabbier; like a garment that has been worn and faded by twelve years' hard wear."

"Indeed you do not look worn and faded," said the tutor's daughter with an involuntary glance at the hot-house flower in the fashionable editor's faultless overcoat.

"I received a letter from your father this morning, Miss Alford; and I thought my best course would be to answer it in person. I

am all the more happy to attend to my old friend's request because your interests are involved in it."

Lucy blushed again—not the blush of self-consciousness or coquetry, but the honest red of innocent gratitude and impulsive feeling.

"It was very, very kind of you to come," she said. "Papa has told me how valuable your time is, and what a high position you hold on the press. He had no idea that you would respond so quickly to his appeal; and—and I am sure I ought to apologise for receiving you in these horrible curl-papers. They are for Pauline."

"For Pauline!"

"Yes, I play Pauline to-night in the *Lady of Lyons*, you know; and she is always played in ringlets—I don't exactly know why."

"Pray do not apologise for the curl-papers. I know there is a prejudice against them; but I really think them becoming in your case. And so you play Pauline to-night? I remember seeing Helen—"

"O, please don't!" cried the girl, with a pretty look of piteous supplication; "everyone says that. 'My dear,' the ladies at the theatre say to me, 'I have seen Miss Faucit in that character; and, without wishing to wound your feelings, I am bound to tell you that if you knew how *she* played the cottage-scene, you would go home and cut your throat.' At least that's what Mrs. M'Grudder, who plays old women on the Oswestry circuit, said to me after—after I came off, so pleased at having been applauded."

"The old harridan! I suppose she is a very great actress herself, this Mrs. M'Grudder."

"O no, she speaks the broadest, broadest Scotch; and in *Lady Macbeth* the boys in the gallery laugh at her dreadfully."

"Then I do not think you need be made unhappy by that lady's sneers. Are you very fond of acting?"

"I love it dearly, and I hope some day to get on for papa's sake. But I find the life of an actress much harder than I thought, and it is very difficult to get on. And I am so nervous."

"You are afraid of your audience?"

"O, no, I don't so much mind them; it is of the other actors and actresses I am most afraid."

"Indeed."

"Yes; they come to the wings and watch me; and then they tell me what they think; and they give me advice; and somehow they always contrive to make me miserable. I am sure sometimes, when I have been playing Ophelia, and have been quite carried away by the part, fancying that I have loved a prince and been forsaken by him, and that my father has been killed, and I am mad, I have happened to look towards the prompt entrance and see Mrs. M'Grudder standing there staring at me in her dreadful stony way, and have heard her say, 'St—st—st!' quite loud, and it has made me break down directly. You see, most actors and actresses have been a long time in the profes-

on, and they have a kind of prejudice against amateurs and novices, and try to put them down. Mrs. M'Grudder had two daughters in the theatre, who both wanted to play the juveniles, and I suppose that's what made her so unkind to me."

"But I suppose you have done with Mrs. M'Grudder now you have come to London?"

"O no, I fear not. My engagement at the Oxford-road Theatre is only for a fortnight. Mr. Mortemar has taken the house at his own risk, you know, in order to introduce himself to a London public; and when the season is over, I must go back to the country—and most likely to the Oswestry circuit—unless I can get a permanent engagement in town."

She glanced at Mr. Desmond when she said this, as much as to say, "You are the all-powerful benefactor who can procure for me that inestimable boon."

Laurence Desmond understood the meaning of that look, and relied to its appeal.

"If any influence of mine can get you the engagement you want, you shall not be long without it," he said kindly. "I don't think you'll find any Mrs. M'Grudders at the Pall Mall or the Terence."

Mr. Alford came in while the editor of the *Pallas* was saying this. He was an elderly man, and he looked older than he was by reason of the whiteness of his straggling locks, and the stooping attitude which had become habitual to his tall frame. He was a man who bore upon him the unmistakable stamp of gentle blood—a man whose good breeding no shabbiness of attire could disguise; and it must be confessed that he was very shabby.

"My dear Desmond," he cried, delighted to recognise his old pupil, "this is more than kind! I expected kindness from you, but not such promptitude as this."

"I should be very ungrateful if I were otherwise than prompt, when I remember how well you pulled me through when I was reading for 'Greats' twelve years ago," answered Laurence heartily. "Miss Alford and I have renewed our old acquaintance, and have become very confidential. I have pledged myself to do my uttermost on her behalf; and if a West-end engagement is her supreme desire, I think I can promise to gratify her wishes through my kind friend Hartstone of the Theatre Royal Pall Mall. But I cannot promise to secure her such characters as Pauline or Ophelia. Hartstone is one of the best fellows in Christendom, but he will think he does a good deal for friendship when he gives Miss Lucy some pretty little young-ladylike part in a *lever rideau*."

And hereupon Miss Alford murmured that to appear at the Pall Mall would be the honour and delight of her existence, however insignificant the character she might be permitted to perform. After this Mr. Desmond and his old tutor entered upon a very pleasant conversa-

tion about the coaching days at Henley, and the three jolly young fellows who had boated and read with Laurence at the Henley villa.

"Poor Max Waldon was ploughed," said the editor. "He was asked who Saul was. 'Which Saul?' asked Max in that sweetly calm way of his; 'Saul of Tarsus?' 'No, sir; King Saul,' replied the examiner sternly. 'O,' said Max, 'he was not a bad sort of fellow, only he had a nasty trick of throwing javelins at one.' And they ploughed him but he is doing wonders at the Equity bar, notwithstanding. Lawley died at Pau the year after he took his degree; and I fear the 'Varsity training and pedestrianism had something to do with the decline that carried him off."

The reminiscences of the Long Vacation seemed by no means unpleasant to Lucy Alford. She took up her work—it was Pauline's bride veil that she was patching and darning for the evening's performance—and sat quietly by while her father and his pupil talked; but ever now and then her face kindled, and she looked up with a smile that meant, "I too remember that."

Mr. Desmond had been sitting in the shabby little lodging-house parlour a long time, when he stole a look at his watch, and was surprised to discover the lateness of the hour.

"I should like to see you play Pauline to-night, Miss Alford," he said, as he shook hands with his tutor's daughter.

Lucy blushed, and looked at her father.

"The *Market Deeping Examiner* compared her to Helen Faucit, Desmond, and I doubt if any lady except Miss Faucit could touch Lucy's Pauline."

"Papa, how can you say such things!" cried the girl. "Please do not laugh at him, Mr. Desmond. I like the part of Pauline so much, and—and I should like you to be in the theatre to-night, only I know you will make me nervous."

"What! do you place me in the same category as Mrs. M'Grudder?"

"O no, no, no! Only—"

"Only what?"

"I should be so anxious to please you; and the more I wished to please you, the more nervous I should be."

"I suppose that is the penalty I am to pay for my editorial position. Very well, Miss Alford, I shall not say whether I am coming to the theatre to-night; but look out for the *Pallas* next Saturday morning, and—"

"And expect a washing," cried the old tutor, rejoicing in the 'Varsity slang.

"Good-bye, Miss Lucy," said Laurence, lingering over these adieux just a little more than was necessary. "O, by the way, I have not had the pleasure of seeing your friend Miss St. Albans after all. Is she too a member of the dramatic profession?"

Mr. Alford and his daughter laughed heartily at this question.

"The girl has one requisite for comedy if she can laugh like that on the stage," thought the editor.

"I am Miss St. Albans," said Lucy; "St. Albans is my stage name, you know. I really thought you understood that just now."

"Not at all; I fully believed in Miss St. Albans as a separate entity. And so that is your *nom de théâtre*!—rather a high-sounding name, is it not?"

Mr. Alford blushed.

"Well, my dear boy, they like fine names, you see," he explained, "the managers and the public. In point of fact, they will have something that looks well in the play-bills. St. Albans—De Mortemar: of course the more enlightened public are aware that those are not real names; but they go down, my dear Desmond, they go down."

"I can only hope that the happiness of Miss Alford may be promoted by the success of Miss St. Albans," said the editor of the *Pallas*, as he made his farewell bow to the young lady in curl-papers.

Mr. Alford accompanied him to the street-door, and apologised for his inability to invite his old pupil to dinner.

"The world has not used me too well, Desmond, as you must perceive," he said; "and yet I have worked my hardest. I have a couple of tragedies in my desk that might conduce to the revival of original dramatic literature in this country; but the ignorance and prejudice of theatrical managers are not easily overcome. I look to my daughter's genius to elevate the English stage. She is a star, my dear Desmond—a newly-risen star; but one that will shine far and wide before long if she has a chance. Go and see her to-night at the Oxford, and you will find that her poor old father does not exaggerate her merits."

"Yes, I will go," answered Laurence, smiling at the old man's enthusiasm. "You must let me give you this, Alford, to—to make things a little pleasanter while you stay in town, for 'auld lang syne.'"

It was a cheque for twenty pounds in his friend's favour, which Mr. Desmond contrived to crush into the old man's hand as he said this. He was gone before Tristram Alford could find time to thank him or remonstrate with him; but the help thus offered by friendship was too sweet to be rejected by pride, nor was Tristram Alford a man who had ever cherished that particular sin amongst the deadly seven. There were tears—grateful tears—in the old man's eyes when he went back to his daughter.

"That noble-hearted fellow has given me twenty pounds, Lucy," he said; "we can rub on comfortably for the next six weeks."

To "rub on comfortably" had been Mr. Alford's highest notion of financial prosperity for the last thirty years. He was a man upon whom the burden of youthful debts, the penalties of juvenile indiscretion, had pressed so heavily as to frustrate every attempt at progress in the race of life. Poor at school, poor at college, poor in youth, and poor in middle age, Tristram Alford had come at last to accept Poverty

as a fellow-traveller, whose companionship must needs be endured to the end of the troublesome journey. The utmost he asked of Providence was a brief interval of rest and refreshment at some wayside inn, while his companion of the chain waited for him at the door.

CHAPTER XIV.

IN THE GREENROOM.

It happened that the day on which Mr. Desmond paid this visit to Paul's-terrace, Islington, was a day unmarked by any particular engagement. There had been a time when he was only too glad to snatch such a day for a quiet afternoon at the Hampton villa; but he no longer felt the same alacrity when the occasion offered itself. He was still fully alive to the fact that Mrs. Jerningham was one of the handsomest and most elegant women he had ever seen, and that to be preferred by her was an honour; but to be submitted to the slow torture of the domestic inquisition is none the less painful because the inquisitor in chief is a beautiful woman, from whose fair lips the victim had hoped to hear sweet words instead of captious questionings and ungenerous reproaches.

Thus did it come to pass that Mr. Desmond, having no imperative claim on his leisure, found himself at the doors of the Oxford-road Theatre, within two or three hours of his visit to Mr. Alford's lodging. He had eaten a hurried dinner at his club, and had driven thence to the Oxford, which house of entertainment was to be found amidst a labyrinth of streets northward of Cumberland-gate.

It is not a fashionable theatre, but amongst the inhabitants of the immediate district it is at times a very popular resort; while there are other times in which this temple of the drama fades and languishes for lack of public patronage, in common with more brilliant temples of the same order. It is a theatre whose normal splendour is ever and anon brightened by the extra brilliancy of some wandering star, whose name, all renowned though it may be in the district, is comparatively unknown to the ears of fashionable playgoers, or known only as a by-word and a reproach.

The great T. N. Buffboote, better known to his admirers as Brayvo Buffboote, is a favourite at the Oxford. Miss Marian Fitz-Kemble, the celebrated lady Lear, here performs her round of tragedy, from Macbeth to Julius Cæsar, with much satisfaction to herself and her friends. Here has the famous Transatlantic equestrian, best known to fame as the divine Miss Godiva Jones, pranced and galloped in her celebrated performances of Dick Turpin and Timour the Tartar. Here in the summer months, when the closing of West-end theatres affords a brief respite to manager and company, there come occasionally actors and actresses of higher repute, eager to gather new laurels in these untrod-

den regions, and not ill pleased to find themselves received with noisy rapture and outspoken admiration by the ruder gods and homelier goddesses of a threepenny gallery.

But while stars may come and stars may go at the Oxford-road Theatre, there is a regular company which goes on for ever, glad to be tragical with Miss Fitz-Kemble, melodramatic with the great Buff-boote, or equestrian with the divine Godiva, as the case may be—a company which takes life as it comes, and asks no more from existence than that its swift-recurring Saturday shall witness the payment of every man's salary.

Urged by the promptings of a fiery and ambitious soul, Mr. de Mortemar had been induced to take the Oxford-road Theatre at the very deadeast and dullest time of the year—that dreary pause in the theatrical season which precedes the glory of Boxing-day—that fag-end of the year, during which the combined forces of a Macready and a Charles Mathews would scarcely suffice to illumine the profound darkness that foreshadows the rising of that brilliant luminary, the genuine face-distorting, policeman-overturning, baby-squashing, red-hot-poker-brandishing, parcel-snatching, crinoline-flourishing Christmas clown—that wonder of wit and humour, who convulses his audience by asking them what they had for dinner the day after to-morrow, or by some sarcastic inquiry about a missing fourpenny-piece.

Mr. de Mortemar had a soul above such small considerations as good or bad seasons. He had that within him which whispered that wherever the English language was spoken there must be an audience able to comprehend and admire his rendering of Hamlet and Romeo, Master Walter and Claude Melnotte, Alfred Evelyn, Charles Surface, John Mildmay, Citizen Sangfroid, Miles na Coppaleen, Sir Charles Coldstream, and Paul Pry.

In *these* few characters Mr. de Mortemar (*né* Morris) felt himself unapproachable. Other provincial stars might pretend to a wider range of character; the modest De Mortemar only sought to surpass a Kean in Hamlet, a Gustavus Brooke in Master Walter, a Macready in Lear, a Charles Mathews in Coldstream, a Wigan in John Mildmay, a Boucicault in the faithful Miles, and a Wright in the inquisitive Paul. This much he felt that he could do, and he had no greedy desire to outstep the limit which liberal Nature had set upon his genius.

"I played a burlesque character of Robson's for my benefit at Market Deeping last year," Mr. de Mortemar remarked to a friend at the little tavern next door to the Oxford-road Theatre; "and the *Deeping Examiner* said that if it were possible I could excel in anything where all was excellence, I did excel in burlesque. But I don't care to make my mark in London as a burlesque actor. A man can't help it if Nature made him versatile, you see, Tommy; but there's some kind of principle in these things, and what Edmund Kean wouldn't have done, I won't do. That's my principle, and I mean to stick to it."

"And so I would, Morty, if I was you. Whatever Teddy Kean could do, you can do," replied the humble Pylades. "And I'll take another glass of bitter, if you'll stand Sam."

"I *have* played clown for my ben," murmured the great De Mortemar; "but, though I drew an enormous house, I felt the injury to my self-respect was poorly paid for by a clear half."

"There ain't nothing you can't do, Morty, from Shylock to a flip-flap. That ale's uncommon hard; I think a six of brandy-and-water warm would do you more good, and wouldn't hurt *me*."

And thus the simple De Mortemar discoursed of the greatness that was in him, while the scantily-furnished benches of pit and gallery attested the badness of the season.

"They haven't heard of me yet," said the star, serene even in the hour of disappointment. "London is a large place, and a man can't get a reputation in a week. The metropolitan papers are slow, sir, very slow, to a man who has been accustomed to see a column and a half of criticism written upon every new character performed by him; but they can't afford to leave me unnoticed much longer; and when they do speak, they'll speak out, depend upon it. I look upon the Oxford-road Theatre as a stepping-stone to Drury-lane, and it was with that view I took it."

Mr. de Mortemar had engaged Miss St. Albans for the heroines of those dramas and comedies in which he intended to shine, not because he believed in her talent—for in plain truth this great man believed in the existence of no talent except his own—but because she was very young and inexperienced, and he could do as he liked with her; which means, in a dramatic sense, that he could keep her with her back to the audience, in an ignominious corner of the stage, through the greater part of a scene, while he shouted and ranted at her from the centre of the boards; and that he could take her up so sharply at the end of her most telling speeches as to deprive her of that just meed of applause an approving audience might naturally have bestowed upon her, and in bestowing which they would have divided that coronal of glory Mr. de Mortemar desired to obtain for himself alone.

Mr. Desmond found that portion of the boxes playfully entitled the dress-circle in occupation of two young women in scarlet Garibaldi jackets and black-velvet head-dresses; one fat elderly lady, in a cap which offered to the eye of the observer a small museum of natural and artistic curiosities in the way of shells, feathers, beads, butterflies, and berries; three warm-looking young men, sprawling and lounging and giggling and whispering amongst themselves in a corner box; and a scanty sprinkling of that class of spectators who come with free admissions, and rarely come prepared for the removal of their bonnets, which removal being rigorously exacted, leaves them wild and haggard of aspect and soured in temper.

Amongst this audience the editor of the *Pallas* meekly took his

place, and prepared to await the rising of the curtain, while a subdued crunching of apples and sucking of oranges, mingled with a chorus of sibilant whisperings, went on around and about him.

Why, in a poorly-filled house, there should always be dispiriting and aggravating delays between the falling and the rising of the act-drop unknown to a well-attended theatre—is one of the enigmas of theatrical existence only to be solved by the masters of the craft; but it is indisputable that a scanty audience, naturally disposed to be captious and low-spirited, is always rendered more dismal and more captious by heart-sickening intervals of waiting, that would make an evening with Edmund Kean or Charles Mathews a kind of martyrdom, but which when endured for the sake of a De Mortemar are exasperating in the highest degree.

During such an interval Laurence Desmond waited with tolerable patience, entertained by the most hackneyed of waltzes and polkas, performed by a feeble orchestra, before the curtain rose for the third act of the *Lady of Lyons*. The flabby act-drop, with its faded picture, did at last ascend, and, after a little preliminary skirmishing, Miss St. Albans appeared, conducted by the great De Mortemar, who wore a long black cloak, and looked unutterable things at the gallery with his solemn eyes, the darkness whereof was intensified by very palpable half-circles of Indian ink. Miss St. Albans had very little to do in this scene. She had only to appear bewildered and a little alarmed by the grinning landlord and servants, and very much in love with her prince. If she had any difficulty in giving expression to such simple sentiments, Mr. de Mortemar saved her from the exhibition of her incompetency, for he contrived to keep her back to the audience throughout the scene, and so stifled and smothered her against his manly breast, that all Mr. Desmond could see of his tutor's daughter was a slender girlish figure robed in white, and a fair head half concealed by the stiff curve of Mr. de Mortemar's encircling arm.

This first scene was short and unimportant; and after it came the cottage-scene—the great scene for Pauline—in which the merchant's haughty daughter finds that her Italian prince is only a self-educated gardener's son, with a mother in a white apron.

Mr. Desmond set himself to watch this scene with a critical eye, for he wished to discover what hope of dramatic success there might be for his old friend's daughter. Well, she was a very pretty, winning girl, and she spoke her lines in a low soft voice, and with a gentle accent which stamped her as of different breeding from the people who acted with her, but—but she was not a genius; or if in her soul there was by chance some spark of the divine fire, it was choked and obscured by the smoke of her surroundings, and had yet to kindle into flame. She spoke her pretty poetical speeches, and wept and trembled and covered her face at the right moment; but she was only a timid young actress trying to act. She was not the demoiselle Deschappelles, proud, loving,

passionate, and maddened by the cheat that had been put upon her. The supreme exaltation of mind, the positive intoxication of the intellect, which constitutes great acting, had not yet come to her. She was timid, self-conscious, nervously anxious to please her audience, and secure the reward of a little hand-clapping and feet-stamping from pit and gallery, when she should have been stung almost to madness by the sense of outraged faith and love abused, as unconscious of spectators as Ariadne at Naxos, or Dido on her funeral pyre.

But if Miss St. Albans was not yet an actress, it is to be remembered that she was only nineteen years of age, and had had little more than a twelvemonth's experience or practice of an art which is perhaps amongst the most difficult and exacting of all arts, and which has no formulæ whereby the student may arrive at some comprehension of its mysteries. It is an art that is rarely taught well, and very often taught badly; an art which demands from its professors a moral courage and an expenditure of physical energy, intellectual power, and emotional feeling demanded by no other art; and when a man happens to be endowed with those many gifts necessary to perfection in this art, he is spoken of in a patronising tone as "only an actor;" and it is somewhat a matter of wonder that he should be "received in society."

"She is very young," thought Mr. Desmond, when the act-drop had fallen on Pauline's passion and Claude's remorse, and when the star had been recalled by three particular friends in the pit and one shrill boy in the gallery. "She is very young, and she is pretty and interesting, and might learn to be a good actress, if there were any school in which she could be taught. But to act with such a conventional ranter and tearer as this De Mortemar would be destruction to an embryo Siddons. This girl seems eminently sympathetic, and is of the stuff that makes our Faucits and Herberts; but where is she to get the right training?—that is the question."

Mr. Desmond kept his place patiently throughout the third and fourth acts of the drama, though the dreary blank between the two acts was a sharp test of man's capacity for suffering. He saw Pauline come downstairs to breakfast, in her smart bridal-dress of lace and satin, to go through all those phases of pride and anger, tenderness and yielding love, which form the crucial test of the young tragédienne's power and genius; and after the curtain had fallen upon Pauline the subjugated and devoted, Laurence Desmond left the apple-munchers and whisperers and gigglers of the dress-boxes to their own devices, and departed with the intention of penetrating to those mysterious regions which lie behind the boundary-line of the foot-lights.

To an ordinary individual the stage-door of the Oxford-road Theatre might have been an impassable barrier; but the name of the *Pallas* was an "open sesame" against which no stage-door keeper could afford to shut his eyes. The stage-door keeper was not a reader of the

popular literary journal, but he had a vague notion that the *Pallas* was a paper affected by swells, and that it sometimes came down heavily upon the great ones of the dramatic world, whose genius no meaner organ dared gainsay. To the editor of such a periodical Mr. de Mortemar would of course desire to be civil; and the door-keeper admitted Mr. Desmond, after having submitted him to a sharp scrutiny, or, in his own phraseology, "taken stock of him, to make sure as he was none of them milingtary coves a-tryin' of it on to git behind, and hang about the place a-talkin' to Mamsell Pasdebasque, which she ought to know better."

Mr. Desmond had never before been behind the scenes of the Oxford-road Theatre, but he had run the gauntlet of the West-end houses; and except that the passages and stairs in the Oxford-road Theatre were a shade or so darker and dingier and dirtier, and a little more eminently adapted for the spraining of ankles and the breaking of necks, the Oxford-road was as other theatres.

After some groping and stumbling in the wrong passages and on the wrong stairs, the editor of the *Pallas* made his way to the green-room. He could scarcely have told himself why he took this trouble in order to say a few kind words to his old tutor's daughter, or whether the saying of kind words was at all required from him. It may be that, having given up his evening to this visit to the Oxford-road Theatre, he came behind the scenes merely because he could no longer endure the dreary misery of the boxes; or it may be that he wanted to observe the manners and customs of actors of a different class from those he had been accustomed to meet. Mr. Desmond, however, did not trouble himself with any consideration of his motive. He came to the greenroom to see Miss Alford, or Miss St. Albans, because it was the humour of the moment to come. He had given himself an evening's holiday from the ever-alternating labours of literary and social life, and he was not sorry to lose the sense of his own cares and perplexities amongst strange surroundings.

The greenroom was a long narrow slip of a room underground, furnished with a few shabby chairs and benches, some flaring gas-lamps, and a cheval-glass, before which the actors and actresses contemplated themselves afresh after every change of costume, more or less pleased with the result of their scrutiny.

Mr. Desmond found his friend's daughter standing before this glass, arranging the scanty festoons of a black-tulle ball-dress, dotted about with little bunches of violets—a dress that Mademoiselle Deschappelles could by no possibility have worn at any period of her existence, but which poor Lucy Alford fondly believed was the exact thing for the last act.

"How do you do, once more, Miss—St. Albans?" said the editor, going up to the glass.

"How do you do, Mr. Desmond?" the girl said, startled, and blush-

ing brightly beneath the artificial pallor which marked the mental agonies of Pauline. "I—I didn't think you'd come behind; it's not generally allowed, you know; but of course with you it's different. I saw you in the dress-circle. How kind of you to come! But it made me so nervous."

"Yes, I could see that you were nervous."

"You could see it! I am sorry for that!" said Lucy, just a little mortified.

"My dear young lady, if you were not nervous, you would not be of the sensitive stuff that makes an artist."

"You—you were not displeased with me?"

What could he say when she asked this question; in faltering, pleading tones that seemed to say, "O, for pity's sake, give me a word of praise, or I shall die at your feet"? What could he say when the soft blue eyes looked up at him with such a beseeching expression? Could he be candid and reply, "You are at present the kind of actress whom the coarse-minded critic calls 'a stick;' your idea of Pauline Deschappelles is a schoolgirl's notion, without force or depth or passion; but when you are ten years older, and have thought and suffered and studied, and have lost all the youthful beauty which now enables you to look the part, you may possibly be able to act it"?

Instead of this, Mr. Desmond fenced the question with diplomatic art.

"It gave me great pleasure to see you act," he said, "and you looked charming. I think fortune is a great deal too kind to Claude in giving him such a lovely and devoted wife after his shabby conduct."

"Do you like Mr. de Mortemar?" asked Lucy, delighted by the small meed of praise conveyed in this artful speech.

"Well, not very much," replied Laurence, smiling; "he is not exactly my style."

"And yet he was such an enormous favourite at Market Deeping," said Lucy, opening her eyes to their widest extent. "But, to tell you the real truth, I do not very much admire him myself; only I wouldn't say so to anyone except you for the world, as it was so very good of him to give me a London engagement."

"It is not very good of him to keep you in a corner of the stage all through your best scenes."

"Yes, that is a disagreeable way he has; but I don't think he knows when he does it."

"O yes, my dear Miss St. Albans, depend upon it he knows very well. Ah, here he is."

Mr. de Mortemar entered the greenroom with his grandest tragedy stalk. He had been informed of Mr. Desmond's visit.

"They have heard of me already," he said to himself. "Perhaps the *Pallas* will be the first to speak out. I knew they couldn't afford to continue their vile attempt to crush me by silence. They have been paid—bribed by some London actors whose names I could mention—to

keep my fame from the public. But there must come a time when they will find it dangerous for their own reputation to play that game any longer. They attempted to crush Kean, and they are attempting to crush me. But they will find it even harder work to destroy me than they found it to destroy little Ted."

This is what Mr. de Mortemar told his friends, whom he rarely entertained with any other topic than his own triumphs, past, present, and future; and this is what he told himself. Impressed with this conviction, he approached Mr. Desmond, and introduced himself to that gentleman with the air of a man who confers a favour, and who is fully aware of the fact.

"I saw you in the boxes during the third and fourth acts," he said, in his grand high-tragedy manner. "You could scarcely have chosen your time better for forming a fair judgment of my Claude. I do not consider it one of my *great* parts, though my friends are pleased to tell me that I have left William Charles Macready some distance behind in my rendering of that character. You were no doubt struck by some points which are not only new to the stage, but which go a step or two beyond the original meaning of the author. As, for instance, at the close of the third act, where, instead of the ordinary, 'Ho, my mother!'—a mere commonplace summons to a parent who is desired to come downstairs—I have adopted the heavy sigh of despair: 'O, my mother!'—expressive of Claude's remorseful consciousness that he has disregarded the widow's very sensible advice in the first act. This reading opens up—if I may be permitted to say so—long vistas of thought, and also gives an importance and an elevation to the character of the Widow Melnotte for which the lady performing that part can scarcely be sufficiently grateful. 'O, my mother! O, my second self, my guide, my counsellor, by whose sustaining wisdom I might have escaped my present degradation and despair!' All that, I flatter myself, is implied in the sigh and the gesture which I introduce at this point. Subtle, is it not?"

"Extremely subtle," said Laurence; "you must have studied the German critics, Mr. de Mortemar. There is a profundity in your ideas that reminds me of Schlegel."

"No, sir; I have studied this," replied the tragedian, thumping the breast of his green-cloth coat, whereon glittered the tin-foil crosses and spangled stars which the soldier of the Republic was supposed to have won for himself in Italy. "I have drawn my inspiration from my own heart, sir; and I am the less surprised when I find that the fire that burns *here* is quick to kindle an electric spark in the breasts of other men. The people of Market Deeping will tell you who and what I am, sir, if you can take the trouble to interrogate them. There are some there, sir, who know what good acting is, and who know how to appreciate a great actor. In London you seem not to want great actors. The age of your Garricks and your Kembles is past; and when new

Garricks and Kembles arise, you shut the doors of your principal theatres in their faces, and do your best to ignore them, or to write them down in your newspapers. But this kind of thing cannot last for ever, sir. The voice of the mighty British public is clamorous for a great actor; and you, sir, garble and misrepresent the truth as you may, cannot long interpose yourself between that mighty public and that great actor. I am, of course, understood to speak in a broad and general sense, sir, and to mean no offence to you in person."

"Of course not. I shall accept all you say in a strictly parliamentary sense, as the *Pickwickians* did upon a memorable occasion. And believe me, Mr. de Mortemar, when Garrick *redivivus* appears, mine shall not be the pen to dispute his genius. In the mean time the public must be content with—ah, you are called, I see, Mr. de Mortemar."

A grimy-faced boy summoned the hero of the night, and the great De Mortemar was compelled to depart before he had extorted from the editor of the *Pallas* the smallest modicum of that praise for which his soul hungered.

Mr. Desmond did not find himself alone with Miss St. Albans on the departure of Mr. de Mortemar. An elderly and bloated individual, in a very shabby gray suit of the Georgian era, hovered near, and surveyed the stranger ever and anon with an observant eye—an eye in which there was that watery lustre, by some physiologists supposed to betoken a partiality for strong drinks. Mr. Desmond remembered this gentleman as the parent of Pauline, and now perceived in his shabby and faded appearance the decadence of the wealthy merchant of Lyons.

"That's rather a strong case of coals, ain't it?" inquired this individual, indicating by a turn of his head that the departing De Mortemar was the subject of his discourse.

"A case of coals?" repeated Laurence doubtfully.

"Yes, coals—nuts—barcelonas. The gorger's awful coally on his own slumming, eh?"

"I really am at a loss—" faltered the bewildered Laurence.

"Don't understand our patter, I suppose," said M. Deschappelles with an affable smile. "I mean to say that our friend the manager is rather sweet upon his own acting."

"Well, yes; Mr. de Mortemar appears to have considerable confidence in his own powers."

"Rather! Bless your heart, they're always coming up to London like that, thinking they're going to set the town in a blaze. There was William Harford—Howling Billy, they used to call him on the Northern Circuit—he came to London thinking he was going to put Macready's nose out of joint—and didn't. He was a wicked actor, he was. Satan will have him some day. A man can't go on murdering *Shakespeare* as *Howling Billy* did without coming to Satan at last."

"P'line! Deechappells! — Miss St. Albans! Mr. Jackson! — last scene!" roared the grimy-faced boy at this juncture, and Mr. Desmond was fain to bid his tutor's daughter a brief good-night.

He did not go back to the front of the house. He had seen enough of Miss Alford's acting to enable him to judge very fairly what she could do in the present, and what she might achieve in the future.

"I will try my best to get her out of this wretched school," he said to himself. "I will try to get her away from Mr. de Mortemar and that curious, good-tempered-looking old man, who talked about Satan and Howling Billy. I daresay I can get Hartstone to engage her for the Pall Mall. He wants pretty, lady-like girls for his farces, and he gives very liberal salaries; and though she won't get the experience that makes a Helen Faucit, she will at any rate get away from the De Mortemar school. I should like to put her in the right-path, for poor old Alford's sake."

HORSE-SHOES ON CHURCH-DOORS

IN many parts of Devonshire, and in others of the western counties, the stranger is somewhat puzzled at finding one or more horse-shoes nailed in regular order on the principal—generally the great west—door of the church. At Dunkeswell, not far from Honiton, where the church has lately been rebuilt, a horse-shoe, taken from the door of the old church, has been replaced with due reverence on that of the new, to which it is fastened with ten nails, said to symbolise the ten churches contained in the deanery, of which Dunkeswell is the head. On other church-doors horse-shoes are arranged in various patterns—sometimes in the form of a cross—and to most of them some story is attached accounting for their remarkable position. Thus at Horwood, near Bideford, the horse-shoe on the church-door is called the “badge” of Michael Joseph, the Cornish blacksmith, who in 1497 led some 14,000 of his discontented countrymen to Blackheath—(the rising was not unconnected with the claims of Perkin Warbeck, although it must not be confounded with the advance of the Cornish to Exeter in the autumn of the same year),—where he was defeated, and was afterwards hanged at Tyburn. On his way across Exmoor to Taunton, Joseph is said to have left this relic of himself and of his trade at Horwood. To another story, far more romantic, we shall come presently. Meanwhile we would suggest that all these stories are more or less inventions after the fact, and that the horse-shoe was originally intended, as it still is when hung or nailed over the doors of Devonshire farm-houses, to keep all evil things—witch, ill-wisher, ghost, “fairy, or fiend”—from crossing the sacred threshold. That it was possible for such creatures to enter a consecrated building, and that no ordinary means would expel them, was undoubtedly the ancient belief, not only of western England, but of all Christendom. There is a grand and grim story in Wace’s life—half truth, half legend—of Richard *sans peur*, the descendant of Rollo, telling how, in a lonely forest chapel, he found an unburied corpse stretched on a bier; and how, as he watched by it through the night, some evil thing reanimated the corpse, which rose and commenced a fierce struggle with the undismayed Norman. Most of these evil creatures—such as the demon ancestor of the Plantagenets, who fled upwards through the church-roof—could not endure the speaking of the holy Name or the elevation of the Host; but no church was safe from their presence. A piece of Devonshire folk-lore asserts that the “wish-hounds”—the unearthly pack which hunts over Dartmoor, and which (like the train of the Wild Huntsman of Germany) is frequently heard in full cry among the hills on a Sunday—are generally in pursuit of some tormented

spirit ; and that on one occasion they followed their prey into a church in service-time, where the ghost was recognised by all the congregation as that of a man who had died some years before. The Cornish Tregeagle too appeared in ghostly form, not only in a court of justice, but also in church ; and the "over-seeing" old wife of the west country, who, like Spenser's witch,

" Can hurt far off, unknown, whomever she spies,"

does, it is believed, much of her evil work from her seat on the oaken church bench. Of course there is much confusion in all such stories as these ; and it would not be difficult to find others—such, for instance, as that of Tregeagle himself, which declares that he is safe from his pursuers when he can pass his head through a window of the ruined chapel of St. Roche—of a very different bearing. But enough remains to show that the belief was ancient and deep-rooted. It is indeed not impossibly a trace of the struggle between Heathenism and Christianity, when such legends would grow up naturally. Thor and Woden, say the Sagas, more than once destroyed the first Christian churches of the Icelandic converts. The horse-shoe itself is, probably from its form and from its material—no goblin can endure iron—one of the most ancient defences against evil spirits—more powerful even than St. John's wort or mountain ash.

On the door of Hacombe Church—one of the most interesting in Devonshire from its fine memorials of the Hacombs and Carews, who have held the manor for ages—are two horse-shoes, of which the traditional story is told in the following ballad, written, we believe, by a master of the Exeter Grammar-School early in the present century. It deserves preservation on its own account ; for, if it has not the true old ballad "ring," it recalls the later verses, which had a merit of their own, of Mickle and his followers. The Champernownes of Dartington rank among the most ancient families of Devon. The only Earl of Totnes was Sir George Carew, created in 1626, and famous in the Irish wars of Elizabeth and James I. ; but tradition in these matters is not very particular.

The feast was over in Hacombe Hall,
And the wassail cup had been served to all,
When the Earl of Totnes rose from his place,
And the chanters came in to say the grace.

But scarce was ended the holy rite,
When there stepped from the crowd a valiant knight ;
His armour bright, and his visage brown,
And his name Sir Arthur Champernowne.

" Good Earl of Totnes, I've brought with me
My fleetest courser of Barbary ;
And whether good or ill betide,
A wager with thee I mean to ride."

HORSE-SHOES ON CHURCH-DOORS

"No Barbary courser do I own ;
 But I have," quoth the earl, "a Devonshire roan ;
 And I'll ride for a wager, by land or sea,
 The roan 'gainst the courser of Barbary."

"'Tis done !" said Sir Arthur, "already I've won ;
 And I'll stake my manor of Dartington
 'Gainst Hacombe Hall and its rich domain."
 So the Earl of Totnes the wager has ta'en.

* * * * *

The land is for men of low degree ;
 But the knight and the earl they ride by sea.

"To horse ! to horse !" resounds through the hall,
 Each warrior's steed is led from its stall ;
 And with gallant train over Milburn Down
 Ride the bold Carew and the Champernowne.

And when they came to the Abbey of Tor,
 The abbot came forth from the western door,
 And much he prayed them to stay and dine ;
 But the earl took nought save a goblet of wine.

Sir Arthur he raised the bowl on high,
 And prayed to the Giver of victory ;
 Then drank success to himself in the course,
 And the sops of the wine he gave to his horse.

Away they rode from the Abbey of Tor,
 Till they reached the inlet's curving shore ;
 The earl plunged first in the foaming wave,
 And was followed straight by Sir Arthur the brave.

The wind blew hard, and the waves beat high,
 And the horses strove for the mastery ;
 Till Sir Arthur cried, "Help, thou bold Carew !
 Help, if thou art a Christian true !

O save, for the sake of that lady of mine—
 Good Earl of Totnes, the manor is thine ;
 The Barbary courser must yield to the roan,
 And thou art the Lord of Dartington !"

The earl his steed began to restrain,
 And he seized Sir Arthur's horse by the rein ;
 He cheered him by words and gave him his hand,
 And he brought Sir Arthur safe to land.

Then Sir Arthur, with sickness and grief opprest,
 Lay down in the abbey chambers to rest ;
 But the earl he rode from the Abbey of Tor,
 Straight forward to Hacombe chapel-door.

And there he fell on his knees and prayed,
 And many an Ave Mary he said ;
 Bread and money he gave to the poor,
 And he nailed the roan's shoes to the chapel-door.





Alfred Thompson, del.

W. T.

NOVEMBER—HOME AMUSEMENTS.

LYRICS OF THE MONTHS

NOVEMBER

Home Amusements

LUSTRE of gold and opal quench'd
Within the skies ;
Wan and awful, like blank despair
On a woe-white face, upon the air
November's shadow lies.

The dun crisp leaves are ankle-deep
In woodland ways ;
Wild winds, shrieking from polar seas,
Cry to the lorn and writhing trees
Of coming winter days.

The squirrel to his garner-home
Has timely fled,
Before the mute snow covers all
The tired land, as with a pall
We hide the newly dead.

Home, if ever we've loved thee, now
We love thee most,
And turn to thee for cheerful hours,
Now that the desolate woodland bow'rs
Their summer charm have lost.

Now, if ever, the youthful soul
Knows purest joy,—
Love, light-springing and void of guile,
Jest that answers the free heart's smile,
Life-sweets that never cloy.

Then bless'd be Home, whate'er the time !
And blessèd be
All home-amusements—song and dance
And “living picture”—that enhance
Home's bright felicity !

C. S. C.

THE ROMANS AT HOME

THE situation of Italy, the summer before last, gave promise of incidents likely to prove so highly interesting as well as important in their results, that I determined on visiting that country, after many years of absence, to witness the two great events in the announced programme of political proceedings, namely, the military operations about to be carried on by the Italians for the liberation of Venetia, and the fulfilment of the convention agreed upon between France and Italy for the evacuation of Rome. I was too late in my arrival to witness the ignominious defeat of the Italian navy at Lissa, the repulse of the army under Victor Emanuel, or the dashing attempts subsequently made by the Garibaldians to force their way to Trent. I was present, however, at the occupation of Venice, and the reception of the Galantuomo by his new subjects, and scarcely regretted that the gentle Adriatic was not compelled to receive the pledge of wedlock from her impetuous but remarkably uncouth bridegroom.

- There, however, still remained one, and an important part, of the political drama yet to be enacted. Rome was to be deprived of French protection, and the Pontiff was to be left face to face with his discontented subjects, to contend as best he might with the small armed force at his disposal against their revolutionary designs. To the Eternal City, which I had not visited since my boyhood, I then went, fully prepared to see realised the generally anticipated overthrow of the oldest throne in Christendom on the very day after the French garrison should have taken its departure.

Having waited for the advent of the healthy season, after refreshing myself in the pure and crystal waters of the Mediterranean at the admirably arranged baths of Civita Vecchia, I proceeded to Rome at the commencement of October, so as to give myself time, by personal observation, to form my own conjectures as to future events. I am not about to weary my readers by a disquisition on the political state of the city, or to trouble them with any description of its antiquities and treasures of art, which they will find most ably and accurately "done" in *Murray*. I mean to confine myself simply to an account of the social habits of the people, their occupations, amusements, and mode of life. I found Rome—the change being no doubt in a great degree due to the dread of cholera then raging at Naples, and the precautions taken to avert its visitation—as well-kept a city as any in Europe; and such it continued to be during my stay there. The unpleasant habits of the lower class of people had been restrained

by good municipal regulations rigidly enforced; the streets were kept scrupulously clean, being swept every morning; and the abominations which formerly disgusted the visitors to the ruins bearing testimony to its past greatness, and to its finest more modern temples, no longer offended the eye.

Coming from Ancona, the dirtiest and most unsavoury city in Italy, the odours of whose streets are intolerable to any one gifted with the sense of smell, but through which alone direct access could then be had to Rome by railway,—the change was quite delightful; and the neat, comfortable, and cheap public conveyances (open phaetons, with hoods to preserve the face from cold or sun), superior in every respect to any others in Europe, which awaited our arrival at the station, and took us to the remotest quarter of the city for sevenpence-halfpenny, with their respectably clad drivers and their active and well-conditioned horses, gave us a favourable impression of the place. The Roman horses—in general small, but compactly built, with action equal to the best that draw our hansoms, and extraordinary powers of endurance—are specially remarkable for the soundness and strength of their hoofs. They work upon the closest and hardest pavements it is possible to find without being lamed or having the foot in any way injured, although not one of those employed in the public conveyances, and few of those drawing private carriages, ever carry shoes on their hind feet. They always travel at the top of their speed along narrow streets without flagways and crowded with people, so that those who use them must be astonished at the very few accidents which occur. It is surprising that the breed has not before now been brought to England, as they are peculiarly well adapted for light cavalry, possessing as they do every quality requisite for active and hard service in the field. The colour of the Roman horse is generally black; and in the equipages of the nobles and cardinals may be seen some splendid specimens, which in height and action would do honour to Mayfair. The hotels are large, magnificent in point of decoration, and—unless during the Carnival, when crowds of strangers assemble to enjoy the fun, and Holy Week, when many come to be present at the ceremonies of the Church—are most comfortable, and reasonable in their charges.

While the vineyards of France were being devastated, and her departments inundated by the fall of continued and torrential rains, the weather in Italy was perfectly delightful, the heat being tempered by a sweet and health-giving breeze. An abundant harvest had been already saved in good condition; the vines were laden with delicious grapes, sold at the modest price of a halfpenny the Roman pound. And one cannot help being sorry that, owing to neglect and mismanagement, the wine made from fruit of so sweet and rich a flavour should not be generally of a superior description.

The Romans possess many good qualities, which render them particularly agreeable to strangers. In so far as regards their intercourse

with visitors they have (I speak, of course, of the lower classes) but one damning fault, namely, a propensity to use the knife—ordinarily carried in the coat or shirt sleeve—on every occasion when they receive even the slightest personal provocation; and this habit may, no doubt, be in a great measure due to the clemency with which those guilty of so sanguinary a practice are punished by a government which from its nature is habitually averse to the shedding of human blood. The assassin, if he be fortunate enough to effect his escape, instantly seeks asylum in a church, out of which he cannot be taken by the officers of justice without a special order from the Cardinal Minister of State; this is, as a matter of course, instantly granted when applied for. Meantime the doors of the sacred edifice are strictly guarded, to prevent all chance of evasion, until the necessary authorisation to enter it arrives; so that the malefactor, who is sure of being ultimately captured, profits nothing by this temporary protection. Should the wound, whether proving fatal or not, have been inflicted in a sudden paroxysm of passion, the punishment is limited to confinement of no long duration; and it is only in case of a previously planned and deliberately executed murder that the penalty of death is ever inflicted.

The Roman boys (as indeed is the case throughout all Italy) far exceed the girls in personal beauty. The women of the lower class are untidy-looking slatterns, except on fête-days and Sundays, when they appear expensively and gaudily dressed. Many among the aristocracy, who take carriage exercise on the Monte Pincio, may be considered as decidedly fine women; but there is a bold and daring expression in their flashing dark eyes not altogether pleasing, and their voices are totally devoid of that softness which forms one of the most attractive charms of the English lady. The men are amongst the finest specimens of humanity. They are polite and obliging to a degree, and will not only direct a stranger on his way with courtesy, but, if need be, leave their occupations to accompany him. A gentleman remained for nearly half an hour at the post-office window, to ask for my *poste restante* letters, on the first occasion I went there; for, strange to say, there was not then (and no doubt it may still be the case) a clerk in the establishment who spoke or understood any language but his own.

Both sexes are temperate, except on particular festivals, in their mode of living. Amongst the poor, the meal generally consists of bread with grapes, peaches, pears, or apples. Should they not be available, a raw cabbage-stalk is substituted in their stead. It is almost invariably eaten while walking about, and at whatever time it suits the convenience or inclination of each member of the family, as they never assemble at table unless on special occasions. Their homes are mean and cheerless-looking, and there is not the slightest attempt at neatness or order exhibited in the arrangement of the scanty furniture.

Neither balls nor *cafés chantants* are permitted, and the theatres are the only places of public amusement.

; and reaping of the crops, the pruning of the vines and gathering the grapes—in fact, every process appertaining to agriculture—performed by strangers, who arrive in shoals at harvest-time, seeking employment; the farmer himself merely superintending the operations, considers labour quite beneath him. An anecdote, for the truth of which I can vouch, will exemplify their *hauteur*. An under-clerk in post-office who had stolen letters, was prosecuted and imprisoned, and being left in absolute destitution. A friend of mine, having ascertained that the wretched woman had lived for a fortnight on one fourth of coffee a day, instantly took steps for her relief. She was admitted into a convent, and most kindly treated; but the nuns assured her pride was so great, that they could never induce her to make her bed: she looked on with her arms folded across her breast, and they performed the work she should have done for herself. If any of them accumulates a petty saving, it is no sooner won than it is lost—one half in the hire of a carriage to drive about with their friends on a Sunday, and “make,” as they term it, “a respectable appearance;” the remainder of the treasure being invested in the purchase of lottery-tickets; and should the money for these purposes not be coming from other sources, they will not hesitate to take even their bed-clothes to the *mont-de-piété* to procure it. The drawing of the lottery takes place on every Saturday, at the office of the Secretary of the Treasury. A balcony on the first floor, highly draped with red and gold, is occupied by two bishops, two trumpeters, a clerk, and a singer belonging to one of the religious orders. The bishops stand at the ends, and in the centre is a machine exactly similar to those used

prelate at the other end, who proclaims the number again, when it is registered in a book by the clerk, and then placed in a glass case for public inspection. The *levy* is entitled to a crown for each unit in the number of the first ticket he draws; that is to say, if it be number two, he receives two crowns, and should it be number seventy, seventy. The first step in the proceeding, therefore, is awaited with marked interest.

As each prize is announced, the bugles play with increased vigour, until the formalities of registering and enclosing the ticket in the glass case are concluded. As the drawing proceeds, the agitation amongst the mass of subscribers below, composed of all ages and both sexes, who are awaiting the result of their speculations, increases in intensity. The fortunate winner of some four scudi—about seventeen shillings of our money—receives the warm congratulations of his neighbours; and, after being embraced by his relatives and friends, proceeds forthwith to engage a *voiture*, in which he and his family take a drive on the Pincio, to enjoy the fruits of his success; while the disappointed again betake themselves to the bureaux, to expend perhaps the last penny they possess in the purchase of other tickets, buoyed up by the hope that their luck may be better another time.

As the revenue derived from this source is considerable, there is no lack of opportunity for speculation, the drawings succeeding each other almost without cessation.

It may be said that this is a species of gambling which should be suppressed by any government, but more particularly by a priestly one, as tending to immorality; but any attempt to do so would be attended with fatal consequences to those who made it. The present Pope determined to put a stop to such a pernicious custom; but he was deterred from carrying out his laudable intention by the dangers which must be encountered, for there can be no doubt that he might with more safety be guilty of the most direct acts of oppression than interfere with this the most cherished institution of his subjects. The low-class Roman never calculates on becoming independent through patient industry; his only hope of attaining wealth is in a happy *coup* in the lottery. Such is the lesson he learns from his parents, and such the principle on which he has acted, or is prepared to act, during life. Deprive him of the opportunity of profiting by the only means he relies on for becoming rich, and you at once drive him to despair, and prepare him for the commission of the most daring crimes.

The necessities of life are cheap at Rome. A litre of strong, sound, rough wine may be bought for threepence. The beef fed upon the Campagna is fair in quality; and large flocks of magnificent turkeys, sold at about half-a-crown a head, are daily, during autumn and winter, driven in from the country, their flesh being disposed of by the pound, like butcher's meat, in any quantity required. In the poorer quarters of the city the turkey-dealer, carrying the bird about to be slaughtered by the legs in his hand, proceeds through the streets whose

There is no appearance of immorality in the streets. The people retire early to rest, and are on foot again, to attend Mass, at five o'clock in the morning.

Mendicity is not forbidden; and though there are many charitable institutions, the poorest Roman, should he have no money, will not hesitate to divide the scanty food he may happen to be eating with an applicant for relief.

The working-classes are not only idle and indolent, but proud, foolishly addicted to show, and the most inveterate of gamblers. The sowing and reaping of the crops, the pruning of the vines and gathering of the grapes—in fact, every process appertaining to agriculture—is performed by strangers, who arrive in shoals at harvest-time, seeking employment; the farmer himself merely superintending the operations, as he considers labour quite beneath him. An anecdote, for the truth of which I can vouch, will exemplify their *hauteur*. An under-clerk in the Post-office who had stolen letters, was prosecuted and imprisoned, his wife being left in absolute destitution. A friend of mine, having discovered that the wretched woman had lived for a fortnight on one sous-worth of coffee a day, instantly took steps for her relief. She was received into a convent, and most kindly treated; but the nuns assured him her pride was so great, that they could never induce her to make her own bed: she looked on with her arms folded across her breast, while they performed the work she should have done for herself. When any of them accumulates a petty saving, it is no sooner won than spent—one half in the hire of a carriage to drive about with their families on a Sunday, and “make,” as they term it, “a respectable appearance;” the remainder of the treasure being invested in the purchase of lottery-tickets; and should the money for these purposes not be forthcoming from other sources, they will not hesitate to take even their bed-clothes to the *mont-de-piété* to procure it. The drawing of the lottery takes place on every Saturday, at the office of the Secretary of the Treasury. A balcony on the first floor, highly draped with tapestry, is occupied by two bishops, two trumpeters, a clerk, and a boy belonging to one of the religious orders. The bishops stand at either end, and in the centre is a machine exactly similar to those used for roasting coffee, except that it is composed entirely of glass, through which all it contains is distinctly visible to the crowd which fills the large place in front, and every street opening upon it from which a sight of the operation can be witnessed.

All being duly prepared, the trumpeters sound a merry note; the machine is repeatedly turned by the bishop on the right hand, so as to mix its contents, and then the boy, raising his arm to its full height, and presenting his open hand to the multitude before him, passes it slowly over his head, until he touches his left shoulder, then moves it back again and draws a ticket, which he hands to the bishop beside him, *who, after opening it and announcing the number, hands it to the*

for, give them only amusements and the excitement of gambling, and they bear tranquilly many things connected with their material interests which would sorely try the temper of any other people.

Some years since, a bank, composed of a large proprietary, was established in the city, under a charter empowering it to issue notes to the extent of 3,000,000 scudi. It was discovered that it had illegally extended its issue to 7,000,000; and its paper being no longer a legal tender, its value had fallen to a discount of seventeen per cent; and such holders of the notes as desired to obtain their full amount took their places *en queue* in the street at ten o'clock in the evening, so as to obtain entrance when the doors opened at nine next morning, as the bank only paid for two hours, and then dismissed the last comers without the means of procuring food for their families, unless at a ruinous sacrifice; and yet no legal steps had, up to the time I left, been taken to compel the shareholders of a concern, which only discharges its liabilities according to its own good pleasure, to meet them promptly, if they have the means.

The departure of the French army—however strange the assertion may appear—has, in my mind, greatly strengthened the position of the Pope. Its presence was a continued menace in the eyes of the discontented, which they took care to adopt as a grievance; while, although stationed for years in the Papal States, the French soldiers, from the difference of language and from their repeated removals from one station to another, remained strangers to the inhabitants. They held little, if any, intercourse with the pontifical troops, and vented their discontent at being so long detained from their country, in a most unwholesome climate, and on a service from which neither honour nor promotion could be expected, in a continued and unsparing abuse of the government it was their mission to defend.

The antipathy of the officers and soldiers of the army of occupation to priestly rule was manifested on every possible occasion, and specially so when, as the guardians and exhibitors of any public places, they had an opportunity of descanting on the past cruelties perpetrated within their walls, which they amplified to suit their purposes, and in their prognostications that similar scenes of cruelty were likely to be renewed upon their departure.

The guardian of the Castle of St. Angelo was a very self-sufficient and garrulous French sergeant; and nothing could be more disgusting than his avowed disbelief in revealed religion, and his hatred of clergymen of every faith, except the confidence with which he detailed atrocities committed in the place—which were never heard of before—and the flippancy with which he converted objects notoriously used for domestic purposes into instruments of torture.

Accompanying some friends, who were there for the first time, we found this personage absent; but his *homme de corvée* undertook to guide the party with such *empressement*, and seemed so anxious at once

to proceed, before the return of his superior should deprive him of the unexpected opportunity of displaying his information, that I seconded his efforts for an immediate departure, judging from the personal appearance of the little fellow, as well as from the suppressed laughter of the surrounding soldiery, that we had an original to deal with; and we accordingly set out. He got through the descent into the tomb of Hadrian, explained how it had been lined with marble and despoiled, creditably enough, and then rolled the ball with the usual effect. It was only when we reached the upper part of the fort that he indulged in the most extraordinary flights of fancy, and committed the most ludicrous mistakes. He had taken up the tale of his superior imperfectly; and when the correctness of any of his statements was questioned had a ready reply, to which he invariably had recourse: "Ce n'est pas moi qui dis cela, messieurs; c'est mon caporal," the corporal, as the foundation-stone of discipline, being an unerring authority in the eyes of the uneducated and simple soldier.

At length we arrived at the dungeon in which Benvenuto Cellini is said to have been confined; when, after he had detailed the prisoner's sufferings in perpetual darkness, and his attempt at escape, I inquired who Benvenuto Cellini was.

"Messieurs," answered our *petit homme*, assuming a theatrical attitude, contracting the fingers of his right hand into a circle, kissing them with a smack, and then waving the arm from him, as all Frenchmen do when they desire to express their admiration of any fair one surpassingly beautiful, and to whose charms language is inadequate to do justice, "Messieurs, Benvenuto Cellini était la plus belle et la plus jolie femme de Rome." Noticing a decided inclination to laugh on the part of his auditors, he continued: "Messieurs, ce n'est pas moi qui dis cela, parceque je n'étais pas ici à ce temps-là, mais c'est mon caporal."

The large jars well known to have been used for holding the oil necessary for the use of the garrison were converted into boiling caldrons, into which those who underwent the torture were occasionally dipped; and no doubt many of our Popery-hating fellow-countrymen and women left the castle firmly convinced that such tales must be true (*Murray* notwithstanding), because they were narrated by an authorised official.

That Victor Emanuel's government will neither take any overt measures itself, nor, in so far as its power of repression reaches, permit them to be taken by others for the overthrow of the Pope's temporal power, and consequent annexation of the remaining States of the Church to their already vastly increased dominions, is almost certain. Prudence as well as policy forbids the attempt. The Italians themselves will not sanction such a step, not only because its success might arouse the indignation of the other Catholic powers, but because the acquisition of the Roman States would be of questionable value, and at best

but of small advantage to the national interests. They already possess five magnificent cities—Florence, Turin, Milan, Naples, and Venice; each of them far better suited for a metropolis than the Eternal City, which never could, except in name, become the capital and seat of government, from its well-known insalubrity except during the months of winter. It has no facilities for commerce; and the habits, tastes, and feelings of its inhabitants totally unfit them for a manufacturing population. Besides being the suitable residence of the Head of the Roman Catholic Church from the number of its magnificent places of worship and religious establishments, Rome is a museum of antiquities, appertaining, it may be said, to the civilised world; for there students of all nations find, without cost, let, or hindrance, the finest models on which to form their taste; and to this double purpose, of being the chief seat of the Roman Catholic faith, and the indisputably best existing school of the fine arts, the Eternal City should still be devoted.

J. D. B.

THE CANT OF MODERN CRITICISM

BY GEORGE AUGUSTUS SALA

WHEN I was a little boy—I suppose it is about eight-and-twenty years ago—having some leisure on my hands, and a little capital (I think about one-and-fourpence, which amply sufficed for my purpose), I started a Domestic Magazine. It was highly literary, although I am afraid most of the “padding” came out of *Mangnall’s Questions* and *Blair’s Preceptor*; and its politics were, if I remember aright, strictly Conservative. We used to believe in Kings and Queens and things in those days; and I well remember how I quivered with excitement when I read in the *John Bull* of the bold stand made by Sir Robert Peel in regard to the Bedchamber Women. My Magazine was in manuscript; I wrote it; it was profusely illustrated; and I drew the pictures—such pictures!—in pen and ink; so that you may imagine that my printer’s and engraver’s bills were not very heavy. Among my contributors—to say nothing of Mangnall and Blair, and an occasional help from Pinnock—were a Big Brother and a Little Sister. I used to address them solemnly in my Notices to Correspondents, and promise to insert their valued communications in my next. I don’t think that, beyond my brother and sister, and my dear cousin Sara, and my mother’s maid Mary Anne, I had any readers. As for my mamma, I regret to state that she pronounced the entire undertaking “rubbish,” and that she ruthlessly confiscated the entire edition (consisting of one and a fair copy) of Number Four, forbidding me, under threat of many pains and penalties, to proceed in my career of authorship. Good soul! she doubtless foresaw into what a scrape quill-driving might bring me some day.

Young as I was, in 1810, or thereabouts, I had some notions of literary heroes and hero-worship. Among the dead, of course, Fielding and Sterne and Scott filled my whole Walhalla. That is the case, I take it, with most boys. Among the living, I bowed down to three giants of the pen. First, there was Captain Marryat. What yarns he spun, what ships he drew, what midshipmen he painted! How fervently I loved Jack Easy and Peter Simple and Japhet and Jacob Faithful and Mr. Chucks the boatswain! Secondly, there was Mr. Michael Angelo Titmarsh, who had just written his *Chronicle of the Drum*, and his *Second Funeral of Napoleon*; and whose *Major Gahagan*, and *Catherine, a Story*, I knew almost by heart. I believed that his name really was Titmarsh, and that he was christened Michael Angelo because he was so great. It was almost a disappointment to me when I saw, some eight years later, in a bookseller’s window in the Strand,

the title-page of a just-completed novel, called *Vanity Fair*, to find that the name of its author—my old hero Titmarsh—was William Makepeace Thackeray.

And my third hero? I believed in the genuineness of his individuality even more than I did in Titmarsh. He was a venerable old gentleman with long silvery hair, who walked with the aid of a formidable ebony cane, of which the crutch was of ivory. He spoke of himself sometimes as "Old Ebony," and he was much given to flourishing this crutch-stick in air, and bringing it down with a sounding thwack on the shoulders of those who had offended him. He was a terrible old gentleman when moved. His wrath was sudden, his castigation was dire. Leigh Hunt he would furiously maul. He had not even much respect for Alfred Tennyson; and I remember that he once ventured to call Lord Byron a "profligate baron." But, ah! I was sure my old gentleman had a kind and tender heart. He could be so genial, so chirping, so convivial when he liked. He used to sup (and sup copiously too) at a place called Ambrose's, and there he would gather round him a band of choice spirits: Sir Morgan O'Doherty, James Hogg the Ettrick Shepherd, Timothy Tickler, and the like. Surely the symposia at The Mermaid, with Shakespeare in the chair and Jonson in the vice, and Raleigh capping epigrams with Donne, could never have equalled the famous *Noctes Ambrosianæ*. I was a teetotaller in those days, and I could not help being slightly shocked at the many evidences scattered through the *Noctes*, proving, beyond a doubt, that my old gentleman and his choice spirits were in the habit of sitting up very late and drinking exceedingly hard. But what rare souls they were! how witty over their cups! how large-hearted in their gormandising! Long afterwards I learnt that my dear old gentleman was the renowned John Wilson, the author of the *Isle of Palms*, the friend of Scott and Lockhart, and that many of the most roaring of the *Noctes* had been composed by daylight, in very sober sadness, and under the influence of no stronger stimulants than soda-water poured out of a teapot. But to me he was always, and ever will be, "Old Ebony," the genius, the autocrat of *Blackwood's Magazine*, the incomparable CHRISTOPHER NORTH. I had almost as much reverence for *Maga* as for the Magician who conducted it, and threatened fools with the "Balaam Box." I esteemed the dun-coloured monthly pamphlet—with that mysterious thistle-encircled vignette, and the portrait in its centre, which I firmly believed, for a lengthened period, to be that of Christopher North himself, but which I was subsequently given to understand was meant for George Heriot, or Drummond of Hawthornden, or Duns Scotus—to be the grandest repository of wit, learning, and eloquence the world had ever seen.

Now it is very sad, when you have gotten a nice little temple, with your heroes all comfortably arranged in their niches—when you have laid in a good stock of incense, and have become an adept in all the

proper genuflexions in the divinities' honour—to find a big brute of an Iconoclast come thundering in, upset your altars, cast down your favourite josses, and pelt you with the fragments you once adored. The Iconoclast who broke into my House of Fame was Time. The Image-Breaker may have right and reason on his side ; but, somehow, it is difficult to stomach him, and his sledge-hammer.

Time spared not Tickler, nor the Shepherd, nor O'Doherty, nor North himself; and Time took me one day by the ear, and, showing me the dun-coloured monthly pamphlet, said to me, " Behold how stupid *Blackwood's Magazine* has grown !" The present number is marked DCXXIII. A ripe old age ; but how desperately dull is that six hundred and twenty-third number ! I suppose it is rank sedition to say so ; but the time is sure to come, sooner or later, when it becomes a duty to talk sedition, and when sedition is merely the truth. We have only just mustered up courage enough to admit that Louis the Fourteenth was a humbug, and Mr. W. L. Bowles a very indifferent poet. It is not a case of murder, I suppose, or arson, or forgery, to assert that the monthly instalments of *Blackwood* are tedious and prosy and jejune. I won't read "The Brownlows." I will see the Editor hanged before I wade through "The Literature of the Scottish Independence Question." As for Barney O'Brallaghan, or Thady Mac Shane, or Cornelius O'Dowd, or whatever the maundering Irishman calls himself, I am loth to bear heavily upon *him*, for, unless I am misinformed, his name was Harry Lorrequer once, and he was one of my secondary heroes, whose *Charles O'Malley*, and *Jack Hinton*, and *Tom Burke* have been the delight of millions of boys. But what have I done that I am to be expected to read "The Question Settled"? Toryism is objectionable enough, under any circumstances ; but stale Toryism ! and stale Scotch Toryism ! Did you ever try to munch an ancient "scon"—a stale Scotch bun ? Dead-Sea apples are juicy and succulent compared with *that* diet. The question settled ! Why it was settled months ago, in five-and-seventy newspapers. Christopher North, I know, is dead. I have no fear of his ebony crutch ; and I resolutely decline to listen to Edinburgh Conservatism, either in the "aibstract" or in the concrete. I know that it is twelve o'clock—high noon ; and it is in vain that the wise men of the Modern Awthens endeavour to persuade me that it wants just three-and-twenty minutes to eleven.

There happens to be, however, in the instant number of this once brilliant but now decrepit magazine—who are the people who buy it ? do they wear pigtails and hair-powder and hessian boots ?—one article which I have read through with a purpose—with *malice prepense*, if you will—and on which it is now my intent to animadvert as strongly as ever it lies in my power to do ; simply because I consider the paper in question—it is the first in the September number—to be eminently unjust, mischievous, and disingenuous, and that it exemplifies in a remarkably *offensive degree the prevalence* of the worst kind of cant, hypocrisy,

and sophistry, as applied to literary criticism. An anonymous writer in *Blackwood* has thought fit to preach a sermon on Novels ; and, with the writer's kind permission, I will proceed to pick his sermon and himself to pieces ; to rip him up and shake the bran and sawdust out of him, and to make of his text a stirrup-leather, wherewith, Heaven willing, I will belabour him to my heart's content, if not to his own.

"English novels," begins this sage, "have for a long time—from the days of Sir Walter Scott at least—held a very high reputation in the world, not so much perhaps for what critics would call the highest development of art, as for a certain sanity, wholesomeness, and cleanliness unknown to other literature of the same class. This peculiarity has had its effect, no doubt, upon those very qualities of the national mind which produced it. (Which ? what ? The "peculiarity" or the "mind ?") It has increased that perfect liberty of reading which is the rule in most cultivated English houses—(I have heard of a cultivated garden ; but a "cultivated house," unless it be a Swedish cottage, on the turf-clad roof of which cows are said to graze in the winter, must be a curiosity. I presume the sage means a house inhabited by persons whose minds are cultivated)—it has abolished the domestic Index Expurgatorius, as well as all public censorship ; it has made us secure and unsuspicious in our reception of everything or almost everything that comes to us in the form of print."

The gist of this solemn exordium is, I suppose, that since Sir Walter Scott's days English novels have been "sane, clean, and wholesome." Sir Walter, it may be observed in passing, only wrote three real novels in his life : *St. Ronan's Well*, *The Surgeon's Daughter*, and *Guy Mannering* ; and the two former are among his very weakest productions. The immortal series of stories told by the Wizard of the North, and which are popularly known as the *Waverley Novels*, are not Novels in the proper sense of the term, but Romances—romances whose splendour shall never pale while the British name and the English tongue endure. The celebrity of mere novelists, however great it may be, is ordinarily destined to be ephemeral. Who but the Dryasdusts now remember Mdlle. de Scuderi, or Afra Behn, or Patty Fielding ? Miss Edgeworth was a novelist properly so called ; and but for some valuable scraps of political economy scattered through her admirable books, Miss Edgeworth would be, by this time, completely forgotten. Miss Porter was a novelist pure and simple, and not one reader in fifty thousand knows anything about Miss Porter, or remembers *Thaddeus of Warsaw*, now. Miss Austen was a novelist of the very first rank ; but Miss Austen is as completely ignored by novel-readers of the present generation as Mrs. Henry Wood will be ignored by the next. Dirty, droll, old Smollett was a novelist ; as a humorist scholars still study his works with delight, and keep them locked up from their children ; but it is as much as cheap publishers, with catchpenny editions, can do to keep the memory of the lewd old doctor who wrote *Roderick*

Random, and died at Leghorn, extant among the reading public. Although *Clarissa Harlowe*, as a wonderful analysis of human passion and frailty, still extorts admiration from many "cultivated" persons, the Man Richardson is as dead as a door-nail; only Fielding, who was less a novelist than the author of an astounding philosophical exposition of human nature, still keeps the field of the world with *Tom Jones*.

Sir Walter Scott died, I think, about four-and-thirty years ago. I will try to recollect a few of the "sane, wholesome, and cleanly novels" written since his day. Shortly before his death he addressed a very kind letter to a young gentleman who had been, or was subsequently, in the bookselling line, but who made his literary *début* in a historical romance, the name of which I forget, but which was built on the well-known Scott lines. Emboldened by Sir Walter's good word, this young gentleman, whose name was William Harrison Ainsworth, speedily followed suit with a book called *Rookwood*—a novel whose sensationalism was wilder, ghastlier, and more immoral than had been in the last epoch the craziest screed of Monk Lewis, or the most hideous phantasmagoria of Mrs. Radcliffe,—than the most blood-boulted chronicles of M. Eugène Sue or M. Paul Féval in the present one. The sub-hero of *Rookwood* was Dick Turpin the highwayman; that thief's apocryphal ride to York was—with the exception of the lively passage about the lady buried alive in a sarcophagus—the most exciting episode in the book; and there were several amusing chapters minutely descriptive of the manners of gipsies and the flash minstrelsy of the Romney Rye. *Rookwood*—eminently a "sane, wholesome, cleanly book"—met with prodigious success. Pluming himself for a yet higher flight, Mr. Ainsworth burst upon the age with *Jack Sheppard*. In this astounding rogue's epic—this Newgate pastoral with a vengeance—the principal character was a low, blackguard, gin-drinking burglar and prison-breaker, whose very commonplace trial you may read at large in the Old-Bailey Sessions papers; but, to meet the requirements of "sanity, wholesomeness, and cleanliness," Mr. Ainsworth made out that the vulgar ruffian, who was so satisfactorily strangled at Tyburn for robbing one Kneebone, a draper, was of gentle blood—kinsman to a French marquis; indeed, Mr. Ainsworth would not even allow his hero to pass out of the world in the manner consistent with the historic truth of his story, viz. by the agency of a halter. There was a riot, it seems, at his execution; the military interfered, and a ball from a soldier's musket pierced Jack's heart just as he was about being rescued from the gallows by some masked footman in splendid livery. We all remember how the town went mad over *Jack Sheppard*, and how the book, converted into a "sane, wholesome, cleanly" drama, brought nightly crowds to the Adelphi to see Mrs. Keeley in small-clothes and with a closely-cropped bullet head—very charming did that excellent actress look under the circumstances,—and hear her sing the wholesome and cleanly lyric of "*Nix my dolly, pals, fake away!*" I know not whether it was

the novelist or the dramatist who put into the hero's mouth the immortal ethical proposition, "*Jack Sheppard is a thief, but he never told a lie*"—assuredly a most cleanly and wholesome assertion. The sanity and cleanliness of *Jack Sheppard* were completed by the introduction of Jonathan Wild, a thief-taker and receiver of stolen goods; of Blue-skin, a robber and murderer; and of two nymphs from the Hundreds of Drury—two common harlots, called Poll Maggot and Edgeworth Bess, of whom Sheppard was the paramour. In this drama of the Gaol and the Lupa-nar, Mr. Ainsworth may be said to have reached the apogee of sanity, wholesomeness, and cleanliness. There was a good deal of blood and gunpowder in *Guy Fawkes*; and that moody maniac was made the lover of a beautiful and accomplished young lady; but Mr. Ainsworth shrank from overtly defending the atrocious blowing up of the Houses of Lords and Commons. In another cleanly and sane romance, entitled *Revelations of London*, our author attempted to mix up the Rosicrucian mysteries and the legend of the Wandering Jew with a description of thieves' dens, dog-stealers' haunts, and deserted houses in the Vauxhall-road: but the public had, by this time, had enough of the particular kind of sanity and cleanliness in question: and *Revelations of London*, like the story of the Bear and the Fiddle, were "begun and broke off in the middle." I am very reluctant thus to dwell on the works which first conduced to the celebrity of a highly respectable gentleman, who since has given to the public many interesting and excellent works: notably *Walter Scott* and the *Tower of London*; but when canting critics have the assurance to say that the foremost works of English fiction published since the death of Sir Walter Scott have been distinguished for "sanity, wholesomeness, and cleanliness," it is time for the truth to be told, and for those who have good memories to tell what they know.

No Editor of the domestic Index Expurgatorius, I conceive, would venture to banish from the family library such charming, tender, humanising books as the *Chronicle*, as *My Novel*, as *What will he do with me*, or as *Harold*, although I have heard of mammas who forbade their daughters to read either *Fanny* or *Fervent*—both capital novels, but both replete with a degree of sensationalism, which the canting critic of *Edinburgh* might well stigmatise as "feverish." The noble author of these works, however, contrived, at about the same time that Mr. Ainsworth was winning his hampden laurels, to produce a number of novels of essentially the same wholesome and cleanly order, and to which I direct the attention of the Edinburgh preacher. There was *Eugene Aram*, for instance, the apotheosis of a bloodthirsty Yorkshire schoolmaster, who, actuated by the paltriest motives, murdered a barber and hid his body in a hole, and, after telling innumerable lies in the dock, was hanged. As the murderer was a good classical scholar, and had even some acquaintance with the Oriental tongues, the noble novelist—then Mr. Edward Lytton Bulwer—made him a Hero, made

him the lover of a beautiful and virtuous maiden, and implied that the detestable crime for which he was duly gibbeted had been inspired by his craving for learning and his desire to buy more Greek plays and Hebrew dictionaries. Then there was *Paul Clifford*, another of the sanest and cleanliest novels ever penned. The hero was a highwayman, the bastard son of a judge, who afterwards sentenced his own son to death. The Editor of the *Athenæum*, who had offended Mr. Bulwer, was caricatured as the companion of cut-purses, "fences," and footpads; and whole pages of the book were taken up with conversations in the purest thieves' slang. Then came *Ernest Maltravers*, and its sequel *Alice*. Nothing could be cleaner or wholesomer than these two masterpieces. The whole burden of the first was seduction; the pervading refrain of the other was concubinage; while in another, *Night and Morning*, abduction and seduction went hand-in-hand with adultery and secret marriage, a torn parish-registry, murder, and the coinage of bad five-franc pieces. With respect to another clean and wholesome novel from the same pen, *Lucretia*, it is sufficient to remark that it was confessedly founded on the career of an unutterable villain called Wainright, who for years made a practice of cajoling young ladies into insuring their lives in his favour, then seducing and ultimately poisoning them.

There is less need to dwell on the coarse, brutal, but amusing novels of Theodore Hook (in one of which a gentleman intrigues with his own sister), published between the time of Sir Walter Scott's demise and the era of what the canter in *Blackwood* calls the "feverish" school. The characters of the day were grossly caricatured in *Jack Brag* and *Gilbert Gurney*, and everybody—man or woman—who was not a Tory was foully abused; but Theodore Hook's novels were decidedly laughable. During the same epoch, also, the Countess of Blessington put forth a number of flimsy vicious novels, descriptive of what is called "high life," interlarded with scraps of bad French, and mainly devoted to the intrigues of demireps and chambermaids. Poor old Mrs. Gore's novels may scarcely have come up to the *Blackwood* sermoniser's standard of "cleanness and sanity." They were simply readable, harmless, and silly, and are now very completely forgotten. But for "sanity, wholesomeness, and cleanness" in *excelsis* we must turn to the novels of Mrs. Trollope—to the *Widow Barnaby*, to the *Barnabies in America*, to the *Vicar of Wrexhill*, to *Michael Armstrong the Factory Boy*, and to *Jessie Phillips*, novels undeniably clever and powerful, but so revoltingly coarse in tone, in thought, and in language, that no publisher of the present day would dare to print them. I had almost forgotten the novels of the Right Honourable Benjamin Disraeli. "Clean" those novels may, without the slightest irony, be declared. Mr. Disraeli has always been distinguished by innate intellectual refinement and delicacy. The "wholesomeness" of *Venetia*, of *Coningsby*, of *Contarini Fleming*, of *Henrietta Temple*, is, how-

ever, very questionable indeed; but about the "sanity" of the entire series of Disraeli fictions it is difficult to hold two opinions. A recluse student who had been ingeniously left ignorant of the fact that Mr. Disraeli has been Chancellor of the British Exchequer and leader of the House of Commons, and is one of the foremost of British statesmen, could scarcely be blamed if he arrived at the conclusion that the writer of *Sibyl* and *Tancred* was stark-staring mad.

With the exception of the works of Thackeray and Dickens, which stand alone, and cannot be classed in the three-volume, thirty-one-and-sixpence category—with the exception of the nautical novels of Marryat, who was a kind of salt-water Paul de Kock—with the exception of the mess-table stories of Charles Lever, and the historical romances of G. P. R. James, I have, I think, named all the novelists of note who "flourished," as the saying is, between the demise of Sir Walter and the "coming up like a flower" of such novelists as Miss Brontë, George Eliot, and Miss Braddon. But I say that, with the early novels of Ainsworth, Bulwer, Hook, and Mrs. Trollope, still procurable at a hundred bookstalls, it is the vilest of cant, it is the sorriest of humbug, to speak of English novels as having "held a very high reputation in the world, not so much perhaps for what critics would call the highest development of art, as for a certain sanity, wholesomeness, and cleanness unknown to other literature of the same class."

Do I intend to maintain that the modern, the contemporary novel of life and character and adventure—the outspoken, realistic, moving, breathing fiction, which mirrors the passions of the age for which it is written, is preferable to the silly sentimentalities of Lady Blessington and Mrs. Gore, to the aristocratic highwaymen and intellectual assassins of *Paul Clifford* and *Eugene Aram*,—or to the dead thieves, bullies, doxies, and turnkeys who were galvanised by Mr. Harrison Ainsworth? Unhesitatingly I say that I do. *Jane Eyre* was to all intents and purposes a "sensational" novel, and some fastidious parents might forbid their daughters to read a book in which there is a deliberate attempt at bigamy; in which there is a mad wife who tries to burn her husband's house down; in which the flogging of a girl at school is minutely described; and in which an impulsive little governess sits on a blind gentleman's knee, and pulls his beautiful dark hair about—likening it to the hair of Samson. *Adam Bede* too is clearly "sensational." There is murder, and there is frailty in it. *Lady Audley's Secret*, *Aurora Floyd*, *Sir Jasper's Tenant*, *Henry Dunbar*, *Rupert Godwin*, *Eleanor's Victory*, *John Marchmont's Legacy*, *Birds of Prey*, are also indubitably sensational. Lady Audley has fair hair, and tries to murder two or three people; Aurora Floyd horsewhips her groom; the adventuress in *Sir Jasper's Tenant* personates her sister. But in all these novels the people walk and talk and act, not like the denizens of some phantom land of anthropophagi, where heads do grow beneath the owner's shoulders, but like dwellers in the actual, breath-


ing world in which we live. If we read the newspaper; if we read the police reports; if we can laugh at such a case as that of the "Honourable Mrs. Geraldine Meurice," or weep over such a one as that of "Angusta Mitchell;" if we have ever troubled ourself about a Yelverton marriage, a Titchborne baronetcy, a Thellusson will, a Road murder, a Cornhill burglary, a gold-dust robbery, a Roupell forgery, a Simla court-martial, we shall take no great harm by reading realistic novels of human passion, weakness, and error. The canting preacher in *Blackwood* insinuates that the language in which modern novels are written is no longer fit to be read by the young, but that we are approaching the verbal license of Sue and Feydeau, and Paul de Kock and Ponson du Terrail. He instances an "irreproachable French matron's" explanation to "an English acquaintance, whose eyes expressed a certain amazement at the frankness of some drawing-room narrative." "*Nous sommes tous d'un âge mûr,*" said the "irreproachable matron;" "*j'espère que vous ne pensez pas que je parlerais comme ça devant des jeunes gens.*" However "irreproachable" in conduct the Scotch preacher's matron may have been, it is certain that her French was not free from reproach. Indeed, he has made her talk like an irreproachable washerwoman. The conversation being among ladies, she would, in the first place, have said, "*Nous sommes toutes,*" and not *nous sommes tous*. But let that pass: the greatest probability is that the matron would not have said anything of the kind. "*Nous sommes tous d'un âge mûr,*" smacks strongly of boarding-school French at two guineas a quarter. "*Mon Dieu! Madame, on est d'un certain âge. On ne parlerait pas de la sorte devant des jeunes gens. Je n'y penserais pas.*" That is French. The preacher's Parisian is after the school of Stratford-atte-Bowe.

It is when our moralist has to advert to the alleged indelicacy of language in modern novels that he comes out in all the full bloom of what Mr. Charles Reade, in a memorable letter to a New-York paper, called "a prurient prude." Prurient prudery is a distinguishing characteristic of modern cant and modern criticism. To be wholly righteous when you assail a celebrated author, you should have the manners of Mawworm and the morals of Tartuffe. Then you can approach in a proper spirit the examination of the author's "language." My own view (not being a Canter) on the subject is, that the best test of the kind of language to employ in a novel is the temper of the public. Occasional coarseness, when it is compensated for by genius and power, the public will suffer. Mr. Charles Reade occasionally kicks up some very rough stones; but the public know that he is a strong man and a True Genius, and let him be. Marryatt was habitually coarse, and sometimes ribald; but the public knew that he was quite honest and well-meaning, and his coarsenesses were condoned. Had I a daughter, I had rather she read *Mr. Milshipman Easy* than the *Disowned*. But the whole question of *les jeunes gens* may be summed up in one dictum

—that novels are written for grown people and not for babes and sucklings. If they get surreptitiously what is meant for their elders, let domestic authority look to it. Domestic authority is not yet dead, I hope. That phantom daughter of mine would not be suffered by her papa to study the elaborately-engraved anatomical atlases of Bouchardon and Sue *ainé* and Doctor Fau, the *Proportions* of Albert Dürer, or the *Canons Plastiques* of Jean Cousin, which he possesses. I should warn her off the police reports. I should gently wean her from a good many advertisements in the daily papers. I should tell her that Voltaire's novels were dull and stupid, that John Dryden's dramas were very dry, that Parent Duchâtelet was quite unreadable, that Cervantes was, though admirable, somewhat too philosophical for her yet awhile, and that *Robinson Crusoe* was better reading for a girl than *Gil Blas*. If she asked me who Casanova was, I should answer Jesuitically, that he was a dreary old metaphysician; and if she wanted to read *Rabelais*, I should declare that his French was too quaint and crabbed for her comprehension. When she came to be one-and-twenty, or got married, I should no more think of dictating to her as to what kinds of books she should read, than as to what kind of stays she should wear—if she wore any at all. *Cela serait son affaire*. But, most assuredly, during her nonage, I should, with equal anxiety, keep her from *Don Juan* and the *Passionate Pilgrim*. For all that, I should not make an *auto da fé* of my books, or discontinue my orders to the news-vendor round the corner. There are books for children and books for grown people. There are books for all ages and both sexes, like *Robinson Crusoe* just mentioned, and the *Vicar of Wakefield*; but we grown-up folks should get into rather an effete and pappy state, intellectually, if we read nothing but about Man Friday, and Moses going to the fair. For all the domestic Index Expurgatorius—and long may it flourish!—there will come a time when our children will know quite as much as we do, and more too; and when they will read all our novels, and, it may be, write novels themselves. I have no fear, because this is the case, for the stability of British virtue, or for the future of the British home. Our daughters will, I have no doubt, grow up to be wives and mothers quite as admirable as their grandmothers were before them. But meanwhile we men and women who live in the world, and have, many of us, lived pretty hard lives too, want novels about That which Is, and not about That which never Was and never Will be. We don't want pap, or spoon-meat, or milk-and-water, or curds-and-whey, or Robb's biscuits, or boiled whiting, or cold boiled veal without salt. We want meat; and this is a strong age, and we can digest it.

I should be content to leave the poor canting creature in *Blackwood* here, but that from the beginning to the end of his sermon—it is twenty-two pages, or forty-four columns long—there is palpably present one guiding and pervading animus. Hatred and jealousy and spit towards one of the most successful novelists of the age—ill-nature and

ill-feeling towards the author of *Aurora Floyd* and a dozen more capital novels shine in every page of the lucubrations of this agreeable soul. There is little need for me to take up the cudgels in defence of Miss Braddon: she is quite strong enough and quite cunning enough of fence to hold her own, and to chastise this canting man of Edinburgh town; yet to me there is a kind of pleasure, mingled with sadness, in assailing her detractors in a magazine which she conducts, remembering as I do that it was in a magazine which *I* conducted—in *Temple Bar*—that she reached her first station in the highway of Fame. She very soon shouldered *me* out of the way, I can assure you, and the conductor was quite trampled under foot by the youngest and least experienced of his lady passengers. I bear her nor any one else in the world any ill-will; I have had other scissors to grind and other fish to fry; yet I often think with a droll kind of ruefulness of the young lady who came coolly and confidently out of the multitude of “constant readers” and “subscribers from the first,” and took her place on the topmost step of the dais of fiction. I suppose it is because she rose so rapidly, by her own unassisted genius, pluck, and perseverance, that the candid gentleman in *Blackwood* abuses her so. I suppose it is because her pen shows no sign of feebleness that he is so exasperated with her, and that he classes her with “Miss Thomas,” and that he calls her novels “feverish,” and that he sneers at “the *Aurora Floyds*” as types of vicious and depraved women. Poor dear Aurora! though she did horsewhip her groom, we all know that she was more sinned against than sinning. I don’t think the Scotch gentleman has ever read *Aurora Floyd*; but this would be quite consonant with the cant of modern criticism. To abuse people they have never seen—to vilify those of whom they know nothing—to “cut up” books they have never perused—to accuse scholars of ignorance, and humorists of dulness—to affect a lofty air when they are only writing so much spiteful drivel for a couple of pounds a week—to scoff at passages they don’t understand—to throw dirt—to accuse their betters of irreverence and immorality—and finally, to be themselves perfectly inane, ignorant, untravelled, incapable “duffers,” who are only permitted to review books because *somebody* must review them, and people who write books are generally too busy or too honest to criticise those of others;—to be and to do all this may be accounted part and parcel of the attributes of a Canting Critic. Without them he would merely be a dunderheaded Libeller.



MY AUNT'S PEARL RING

BY ADA BUISSON, AUTHOR OF "PUT TO THE TEST," ETC.

"THAT pearl ring, Mabel,—you prefer that to all the others?"

I fancied my aunt spoke in a slightly regretful tone, although she had emptied the contents of her little jewel-casket into my lap so carelessly, and bid me select the trinket which should be her gift to me on my approaching wedding-day.

"You know I have a strange fancy for pearls, aunt; but if you have the slightest affection for this ring, I would not take it for the world;—and indeed," I added, setting the delicate little circlet aside and turning again to its more glittering fellows, "I daresay I can find one which pleases me equally amidst such a collection."

But with a little hasty movement my aunt threw it back, saying "No, no, my dear; if you like it, take it. I have no affection for it. Heaven knows I have little cause ever to wish to see it or hear it again." And then, seeing that I looked up in some amazement at her unusual energy, she added, with almost a scornful smile, "What are jewels to me now?"

We were silent a moment or two, and somehow I felt that, in spite of the quiet manner with which my still beautiful aunt sank back into her chair and resumed her embroidery, I had inadvertently touched some painful memory, and roused some emotion which it required her strength of will to repress.

She was no ordinary character, as I well knew. Self-possessed and reserved to a remarkable degree, she had always inspired me with more awe and respect than loving confidence; but as she sat there with the evening light falling on her delicate face, her lips firmly compressed, her brows slightly frowning, something seemed suddenly to thaw my heart towards her; and in spite of her frigid manner, I drew closer to her, and, laying my head on her knee, said softly, "I forgive you, aunt Magdalen."

Her needle went very fast for a few stitches, and then, as if with some resolution which cost her an effort to make, she laid down her work, and fixing her eyes on mine, gazed at me for some moment thoughtfully and intently.

"I am not superstitious, Mabel, as you know," she began slowly and laying her light cold hand on my head; "but I think before I quite conclude the matter of the pearl ring, I should like to tell you

its history. I am not sure that you will think it an auspicious bridal gift when you know all about it, and—and me.”

Her voice dropped painfully as she said the last words, and I saw by her face that the memory of some past sorrow was pressing upon her with a force that even her strong will could scarcely meet and master.

“It is not a pleasant story to tell, Mabel, and it is one which, though known to others, *my* lips have never before told; and—”

“If it is painful to you, dear aunt,” I interrupted quickly, “do not make such an effort for me, then. Never mind about the ring, aunt Magdalen; give me that little cross you used to wear,—indeed the only ornament I have ever seen upon you: I shall treasure it even more than the pearl ring.”

“Hush, my dear—hush!” she answered, more kindly, however, than was her wont. “I have made up my mind to tell you this story. Do not interrupt me, but listen quietly; and if you can draw any lesson for your own future guidance in life, do; and then, at any rate, some good may result from my pain.”

I was very handsome when I was your age, Mabel; I was, moreover, accomplished; and having lived a good deal with a fashionable cousin in London, I had acquired all the polish of manner, at least, which the habitual contact of good society gives. So when on one of my rare visits home I met and became engaged to Lord Rutherford, the possessor of Rutherford Park, no one was very much surprised, except perhaps myself.

Your mother was many years my senior, and though an angel in disposition, she had never been remarkable for beauty; neither was she accomplished; and she therefore regarded me as a marvel, and thought no position too high for me to aspire to. My father shared her enthusiasm, and the consequence was, when I occasionally came to spend a month or two at the quiet country rectory, I was treated as a kind of divinity by my own family, and fêted and admired as a superior being by the quiet country neighbours.

In justice to myself, however, I must say that, although naturally enough I was willing and pleased to be flattered, my head was not altogether turned by it; and I had acquired enough worldly knowledge in my London experiences to know that beauty was not the sole charm by which husbands were to be won—especially noble husbands—or fate ruled. And when, therefore, Lord Rutherford asked me to be his wife I was very much delighted and certainly a little surprised.

I accepted him without a moment's hesitation; or rather, I should say, I accepted his coronet and fortune; for of himself, except as a necessary appendage to these desirable blessings, I thought nothing.

He was dark, and stern, and rather cold in manner; and certainly had he been a *simple nobody* I should never have dreamed of pre-

ferring him to a light-hearted captain of dragoons who happened to be staying in the neighbourhood, and who for some time had been paying me devoted attention.

Guy Deveril was one of those men to whom the term "fascinating" may be truly applied. He certainly thoroughly understood the art of making himself agreeable; and if he did not win hearts quite so quickly or constantly as he fancied, he won without difficulty those first vivid fancies which a little constancy on his part could soon have made firm, even fierce, love.

I certainly liked Guy better than Lord Rutherford, and it was rather a trial at first to have to give him up as my constant companion in walking and riding, and take dark, stern Eustace instead; but the coronet kept me firm for the first few days, and then gradually my betrothed's truly noble character became more revealed, and if I did not love him enthusiastically, I learned to respect and honour him, as well as to appreciate his refined and intellectual conversation.

The more I was with him, too, the higher grew this esteem; and, in justice to myself, I must say, that though I felt my own nature was scarcely fit to soar with his, I made vigorous efforts to make myself more worthy of him.

I was clever after a style of my own, and perhaps really more acute in my appreciation of character than Lord Rutherford, and I clearly saw that he did not comprehend me; I saw that he worshipped rather some ideal standard of female perfection which he imagined developed in me than my real true self.

But this pained me.

In the first place, I was too sincere to wish to deceive him; but at the same time I was afraid of his suddenly becoming aware of my inferiority and ceasing this devoted worship.

In spite of my disquietude, however, the courtship proceeded very quietly for some weeks, and things were advancing satisfactorily towards the consummation of all our hopes. The wedding-day was fixed, my trousseau was nearly ready, the sojourn for the honeymoon was decided on, and as far as human ken could reach nothing appeared which could possibly interfere with the event which was to place a coronet on my brow and make me the wife of dark, stern Eustace Rutherford.

[My aunt paused a moment, and looking dreamily out over the distant scene of orchard and garden, dimly glimmering in the last faint rays of the red sunset, sighed sadly.]

I seem to see those scenes of the past still. I could almost fancy that figure pacing there beneath on the lawn, and pausing every now and then to look at this window, was that of Eustace Rutherford. It was just such an evening, I remember, when as I sat there on that seat, Mabel, over which hangs that rich laburnum, I was startled by Eustace's hurrying up in a breathless state, and seizing my hand, ex-

claiming, "Magdalen, I must leave you; my mother has been taken dangerously ill and I must go to her. I have only an instant to say good-bye, but I will write;" and then, before I could say a word, he had kissed me hastily and was gone.

I turned pale and cold, though I scarcely knew why, and without further delay I went into the house to tell the news to my sister Alice.

"This is indeed sad. Poor Eustace! he loves his mother so devotedly," she exclaimed simply.

"Yes," I answered; "and it will put off our marriage for Heaven knows how long."

Ah, in my selfishness I was a true prophetess.

Alice looked up gravely. "That should scarcely be your first thought, Magdalen."

"I know it ought not; but I'm not a good young person like you, Ally, and—and besides I'm in love, you know," I replied lightly, as I was wont to do when I felt I ought to be ashamed of myself; and then I sat down to the piano and began dashing off a brilliant waltz, till my sister's light hand laid upon my shoulder suddenly checked me.

"Don't play that now, Magdalen; come to tea and calm yourself a little," she said. "You are unwise to give way to such excitable moods: Lord Rutherford is not the nature to stand it."

"I know that, and I do not indulge in them before him," I replied.

"But if you allow this habit to grow, when you are married you will not find the restraint easy," she exclaimed.

"I shall not trouble myself then; my husband must take me for what I am," was my reply.

I needed not Alice's firm "You are very wrong, Magdalen," to make me aware of the fact; but somehow that evening I felt as if some great pressure had been taken off me, and my own true nature, evil though it might be, would out.

I went out again into the garden, to avoid continuing the conversation, and to calm myself.

The next day I watched anxiously for a letter—for, truth to tell, I was particularly anxious that my wedding should take place at the time named, and if Lady Rutherford died I knew this could not be. But to my surprise Eustace did not write for a couple of days, and then only a hurried note to say his mother continued ill, but that he thought there were still faint hopes of her ultimate recovery: he did not even mention his return.

I was disappointed; but at the same time I knew Lord Rutherford's cold nature, and I therefore comforted myself with the thought that he probably had not the gift of warm love-letter writing. I was naturally of a lively disposition, and putting the epistle in my desk, I certainly troubled myself but little about it, turning my attention to such amusement as Eustace's absence now gave me leisure to join in.

Instead of confining myself to the rectory garden, I went visiting amongst the neighbouring families, and—alas for my weakness and idleness!—again fell into the company of Guy Deveril. Since my engagement to Lord Rutherford I had done my best to avoid Captain Deveril, feeling that it was better for my own happiness and also more pleasant to Eustace, who, though he would not stoop to outward demonstration of jealousy, was one who I knew would brook no rival. Now that I had nothing to do, however, no one to be with constantly, the temptation was too great for me to resist, and, insensibly, from meeting Guy in company, and talking generally with him, I passed on to strolling with him apart from others, and finally to *tête-à-tête* rambles and moonlight saunterings, much in the same free way which I had been wont to indulge in before my betrothal.

Guy was more on a level with myself than the stern intellectual Lord Rutherford, and the effort I made to comprehend and appreciate Eustace was not necessary when I was with the gay captain.

He loved pleasure, romance, poetry, music—all that could give sunshine to life, but which gives no help to weather its storms—and I was of the same light nature. His company charmed me, his flattery charmed me, and that gallant attention in little matters, which Lord Rutherford would never have thought of paying, charmed me. But though I indulged my vanity and love of gaiety, my conscience was still on the alert, and as yet I was faithful in my thoughts to Eustace, and if he had but returned then, as I hoped and expected, all might yet have been well. Ah, how different indeed might my fate have been!

Days, weeks passed—a couple of months went by, and Lord Rutherford only wrote that his mother lingered still, but in such a state that from day to day they expected her to breath her last. Our union he never mentioned; only once or twice did he speak of his return; and though his letters came regularly enough, and always breathed affection, I began to receive them as a matter of course, and to grow slowly less interested in their contents.

I was a little displeased with Eustace at thus deserting me for his dying mother, and the attentions of Guy Deveril were therefore all the more welcome; and, I know not whether by design or not, just at that time Guy pressed them more assiduously than ever, and whenever he could be he was always beside me.

Alice shook her head, and my father looked grave; but I used to laugh and say I was dull without Eustace, and should die if I had no one to help me while away the time, or else I put on an offended air, and with flashing eyes asked them if they distrusted me. My foolish pride made me obstinate—I would not be reprimanded and ruled by simple Alice, who spent her life in cutting-out clothes for the poor, and visiting the sick—and in very bravado I increased rather than diminished my intimacy with the gay captain.

Meanwhile my imprudence was attaining its culminating point.

In a neighbouring town there was a grand fancy fair about to be held in aid of some charity, and a cousin of Guy Deveril, who was one of the lady patronesses, asked me to join her in keeping a stall. The invitation was sent to me through Guy, and he was very urgent that I should accept it, as the office of driving me to and from Little Denton would fall to him, and indeed we should be able to pass the day together in a scene of excitement and gaiety such as we both loved.

My conscience was not quite easy, but I agreed, and set about preparing a dress which should do justice to the occasion and my own beauty; and after not a few hours' hard labour I laid a costume out before Alice's wondering eyes which even she declared would make me the belle of the fête.

You will think me very foolish, Mabel; but do you know I dreamt of that dress? I longed to wear it as eagerly as any village school-girl longs to put on her new bonnet. You may conceive, then, my disappointment when, on the eve of the fair, I received a letter from Eustace, which at first sight seemed to make the pleasure impossible. It was a long letter, filled with accounts of his mother's health, and his own intense anxiety to get over the next few days, during which a crisis was expected to take place in the disease; but in a short post-script he said, "I have heard that you have been asked to patronise the charity fair at Little Denton. I will send you 10*l.* as my contribution. Of course under our present circumstances you cannot be expected to appear at such a place."

That was all. He seemed to consider it a matter of course that whilst his mother lay dying I should never dream of appearing in any public place of amusement. To make such a request as a favour granted to himself would have appeared like an insult to my good feeling and good taste.

But instead of arguing in this way, I exclaimed, "How selfish lovers are! Eustace expects me to feel as much for his mother, whom I never saw in my life, just because she *is* his mother, as he does! Absurd!" And then crumpling up the letter, I dashed downstairs to stop Guy Deveril, who happened at that moment to be passing the garden-gate and casting longing looks up at my window, to tell him that after all I must give up the anticipated pleasure; and also to ask him to make my excuses to his cousin for deserting her party after so short a notice.

"Give up the fair!" exclaimed Captain Deveril. "Why, Magdalen, whatever spirit of change has seized on you?"

"It is a great disappointment," I said; "but Lord Rutherford would be seriously offended, I fear, if I went."

Guy never spoke against Eustace to me; but he was always meaningly silent whenever his name was mentioned.

"And what harm can you do his lordship by going? By George, a man *should not leave a girl for ten or twelve weeks in such an inex-*

plicable manner, and then expect her to live like a nun! Rutherford is unreasonable!"

I was silent, for I did not choose to join Guy in abusing my betrothed.

"I suppose he thinks it would look odd," I said after a pause; "and perhaps it would; but I am very sorry. Will you tell Mrs. Deveril, and say also that Lord Rutherford intends contributing 10*l*. to the charity?"

"Let him keep his money!" exclaimed Guy savagely. "10*l*. won't make up for your absence; and indeed, Magdalen, I must say I think you are a little ridiculous."

"Ridiculous, Captain Deveril! Why, what can I do? I would do anything to go—at least," I added as Guy turned suddenly and looked at me with a strange expression—an expression which frightened me a little—"anything that was not absolutely wrong."

"Well, then, burn Lord Rutherford's letter, and *go*," was his reply in low tones. "Perhaps it would not be quite the correct thing, all things considered, for you to attend the stall and make yourself conspicuous; but there would be no manner of harm in your driving quietly over and walking through the place with the other steady people who come to spend their money. Even Lord Rutherford only meant your joining the stall-keepers. Besides, Magdalen, the Little Dentonians are a distinct set from this neighbourhood. Few persons would recognise you."

He was leaning over the gate, and somehow his hand touched mine as he said this; but I did not remove mine.

"It will be horribly dull without you, Magdalen; and go I must, for I have promised Julia," he went on. "Do come. There really won't be any harm."

Still I hesitated. I was sorely tempted. I thought of the elegant dress, the pleasures of a day leaning on Guy's arm in a tolerable crowd of company; and then I contrasted the dreariness of twelve whole long hours wandering about the dull garden or village, and Guy at Little Denton. Surely Eustace did expect too much; besides, would he ever know?

"Come," Guy exclaimed suddenly. "You relent. You won't begin slavery till you leave the altar, at any rate; and I shall be at the gate to-morrow punctually at twelve. Good-night." Without waiting for me to say yes or no, the captain turned as he spoke, and disappeared behind the rose-hedge.

When I went into the house ten minutes after, I never said a word to Alice about Lord Rutherford's letter; and when she said to me, "I suppose, Maggy, you are quite ready for to-morrow," I answered simply, "Yes; quite."

Well, Mabel, I went to that fête, and I confess I enjoyed it. My disposition was one which thoroughly loved excitement; and whilst

flattery and compliments sounded in my ears conscience had no chance of being heard. I was the handsomest girl there; and Guy, proud of being my chosen cavalier, was as devoted as I could possibly desire. Indeed that day he ventured on more downright love-making than he had ever before attempted; and he gave me to understand (at least so I thought) that even then, if I would desert Eustace Rutherford, he would only too readily claim me as a wife. I came home in a whirl of excitement; and it was only when I laid my head on my pillow, weary and exhausted, that my restless thoughts turned to consider what might be the consequences of my conduct.

I grew strangely anxious now that I had dared fate; and I trusted most intensely that Lord Rutherford would remain away from the park long enough for the excitement of the fair to subside entirely. So anxious was I, that I condescended to say to Alice that I thought perhaps I had outstepped the bounds of propriety in going, and that I hoped she would not mention it in Eustace's presence.

It happened that on the previous day I had lost a small locket, of no great value; but being particularly fond of it (and indeed of all jewelry), I had shown some vexation at the loss, and sought anxiously about; and the next day I was not surprised therefore to see Guy appear at a later hour than usual, as he had promised to go to Denton and make inquiries.

I was seated in my accustomed place under the drooping willow, working, when Guy approached, and throwing a small packet into my lap, dropped into the seat beside me. "My locket!" I exclaimed. "A thousand thanks! I scarcely expected you would succeed."

"Nor have I," replied Guy. "I thought *that*, however, might replace it. I went to Smith's, but they had nothing like the locket; and I knew your fancy for pearls."

Meanwhile, in some surprise, I had unfastened the packet, and discovered a magnificent pearl ring instead of my humble little gold medallion.

"O, but, Guy, I ought not to accept it!" I exclaimed. "You forget I am engaged to Lord Rutherford."

"Stuff! Are you never going to take a friendly gift from anyone when you are his wife? Nonsense, Magdalen! I was the means of your losing your pet locket, and I do my best to replace it. Do not be so unkind as to reject my offering."

A little while ago I should have refused it firmly; but the wrong path descends very easily, though swiftly, and I was already some way in my descent. "Eustace must never know about it, then," I thought; but I slipped on the beautiful trinket, and laughed as Guy declared I ought only to wear pearls, for they were the only ornament delicate enough for my fragile white fingers. Still I was not quite easy; and when Alice suddenly joined us, I carefully hid the hand newly decorated from her sight.

I do not think Guy was pleased at this interruption ; but for once Alice was not to be frightened away by even Guy's displeasure, and producing her work, she sat down and remained with us till the captain reluctantly said he must prepare for his walk home ; and even whilst we sauntered down to the gate, and stood for an instant or two chatting, she remained within view on the lawn, as if resolutely determined to watch him out and me in.

But I was not inclined for a lecture ; and so leaning my arms on the gate, I resolved to try Alice's patience a little.

Presently a step coming in the direction Guy had gone made me look up. Of course it must be Captain Deveril returning for something. I saw a man's shadow approaching, and then I started back. It was Lord Rutherford who stood before me.

I turned icily cold as he caught me in his arms.

"How you startle me ! I did not expect you in the least," I exclaimed ; and making an effort to hide my embarrassment under a show, at least, of delight,—“When did you come ? How is Lady Rutherford ? Why did you not write ?”

“Not a dozen questions, please, dearest, in one breath,” he answered, with a pleased laugh, however. “Let me look at you, and see that it is truly yourself.”

He was in high, even excited spirits for him ; and I could not help gazing up at him in astonishment, remembering his late anxious letters.

He rushed into the house to give Alice and my father a hasty greeting, and then rejoined me in the garden, having, he said, something particular to say to me. My guilty conscience would have shrunk had he not uttered the words so joyfully, and seemed so happy ; and so I stood there waiting for him, and most earnestly trusting that all would be right.

A favourable turn had taken place in his mother's malady, and now the physicians ordered an immediate removal abroad ; and her great desire was that our marriage should take place immediately, and that after a short honeymoon we should join her in Italy. Lord Rutherford urged me most earnestly to accede to her wish and his, and of course I was willing enough.

Eustace talked unusually fast ; there was much to arrange and little time to do it in, as the wedding would have to take place early in the ensuing week. His own business at the park, too, required his presence ; and so after an hour's earnest conversation he prepared to leave me. I could scarcely believe, as I walked down to the gate the second time that evening, that in such a short space so much had happened. Guy was almost forgotten—the fair quite. All I remembered was that next Tuesday the ambition of my life would be gratified, and I should belong to the British peerage.

We stood at the gate, and for once Eustace lingered and we talked.

I had a nervous habit of twisting my fingers when excited ; and was it my evil fortune or an avenging Nemesis made me fidget with them then ? My thoughts were so entirely engrossed, that I quite started when Lord Rutherford suddenly exclaimed, "Mind, Magdalen; you have dropped a ring." He stooped, and, to my horror, took up the pearl circlet. "Ah, that reminds me I have forgotten the case of pearls my mother sent you. What a delicate little affair ! I didn't give you this, did I ?"

"No," I replied faintly ; and then, as he still held it admiringly, I added daringly, "Papa gave it me years ago."

Perfectly satisfied, he slipped it on my finger, saying, "I wish I had remembered my mother's gift. Well, never mind ; all will soon be yours. Good-night, dearest."

I had never told Eustace a flat untruth before, though I had not hesitated to deceive him ; and I felt anything but comfortable as I retired to bed that night. I was very much excited ; nevertheless I could not help being haunted by an uncomfortable dread of to-morrow, and directly I got to my room I carefully locked up that fatal ring.

* * * * *

I was not surprised that the whole of the next day passed without Eustace making his appearance, for I knew he was very busy with servants and tenants ; but as the evening drew on I grew a little uneasy.

This uneasiness increased when, just as we were going to sit down to tea, my father suddenly summoned Alice out of the room.

Had anything occurred ? My heart beat so that I could hear it above the ticking of the clock.

A quarter of an hour passed, and then, to my intense relief, the door opened, and Alice returned. She was deadly pale, and coming up to me, she seized my hands, and almost dropped down on the stool before me.

"Something has happened ?" I exclaimed calmly, for I felt desperate,— "something has happened, Alice ? do not keep me in suspense. It is about Eustace ?"

"It is," she answered faintly. "O, Magdalen, what have you done ?"

"I have been foolish, I know ; but—"

"Worse, worse !" she exclaimed. "You have been mad. You have given room for Guy Deveril's boasting."

I turned pale.

"What do you mean, Alice ? tell me out plainly what has occurred."

"I scarcely know the whole of the story myself ; but it appears that some chance brought Lord Rutherford and Captain Deveril together late last night in company, where it angered Eustace to hear Guy speak of you with the freedom he did. He boasted, Magdalen, that he had more influence over you than your betrothed, and that it was the

coronet alone which made you accept Rutherford. Finally, as words got higher, he declared that you wore his *gage d'amour* on the same finger with that of your engaged ring. Lord Rutherford gave him a flat contradiction, declaring it was false; and you may guess the rest."

"A challenge!" I whispered faintly. And Alice burst into tears.

I cannot distinctly remember all that passed that miserable evening. I was like one in some terrible dream. Somehow I found myself out in the night-air, running between the rose-hedges; and I distinctly see the scene, even now, of summer stars gleaming here and there through the foliage of the trees. And then I stood in the great library of Rutherford House.

Lord Rutherford was sitting by the table, with the light falling on his face, writing; but as I entered he looked up. What I said I know not,—whether I made a full confession and besought pardon, or whether I gasped out a few accusing sentences, and left Eustace to guess the truth,—I never distinctly knew. Some words of his, though, stamped themselves on my heart, and haunted me for years:

"Tell me one thing, Magdalen," he said sternly,—“that ring, was it Captain Deveril's gift?"

"Yes," I answered faintly.

"Then you told me a falsehood; *you*, Magdalen, stooped to the degradation of untruth. I have indeed been deceived."

There was a silence—a deadly silence—during which Eustace Rutherford stood looking down on me from his tall height with an expression of stern resolution. I knew I was condemned; my judge was just but merciless.


"I will grant your request," at length he said in clear low tones; "I will apologise to Captain Deveril: he spoke truth;" and then he turned and walked out of the room, and left me.

I never saw him again—indeed never. I was very ill after that, and it was weeks before I recovered complete consciousness, or could comprehend the few lines of farewell he had left for me before starting for the Continent. He did not reproach me for the past, but he only said that we ought both to feel thankful that *before*, rather than *after*, marriage we had discovered how totally unsuited we were to make each other's happiness.

Guy Deveril left the neighbourhood during my illness. You see, Mabel, my punishment was not undeserved; but it was heavy. And now what say you to the pearl ring? Think you that it is an auspicious bridal gift?







HAPPY TIDINGS

THE sharp rat-tat—the post has come !
Tidings are here of friends long parted :
To some of hope and joy,—to some
The news that leaves them broken-hearted.
That heap of letters which he bears—
Who knows what destinies are in it ?
Sorrow and laughter, mirth and tears :
The post ! some bless, some curse the minute.

But if the face can tell one aught,
One scarcely now need be afraid, he
The best of good news must have brought
To yonder bright-eyed smiling lady.
Good news, good news has come, 'tis plain—
Is it from sister, brother, cousin ?
Or is it from some sighing swain ?—
Lovers she has at least a dozen.

What words precisely writ are there
One need not now stay to discover ;
Besides, it would not quite be fair
The reader's shoulder to peep over.
Enough proclaim those glistening eyes—
The postman here has brought a treasure ;
And if at times my lady sighs,
'Tis not in sorrow, but pure pleasure.

We'll leave her here alone to read—
To gloat in secret o'er her letter ;
Her looks, whate'er its theme, concede
It could not well be any better.
Or, as we mentioned "theme" above,
We'll simply offer one suggestion—
It is *not* unrequited love ;
And so we may dismiss the question.

T. H. S. E.

LONDON PARKS

BY WALTER THORNBURY

III. Hyde Park

WHY should invocations be permitted only to the writers of epic poems? Why, we say, should the anecdotal and semi-historical essayist be denied the privilege of also flapping his wings before he rises from his humble roost? Let us here, then, make a solemn protest against this conventional tyranny, and invoke someone or something before we charge along Routine Row, Route du Roi, or whatever the intricate etymology of that pleasant ride may be, before we wander along the shores of the sable Serpentine, pass under the Marble Arch, or grow meditative beneath the dusky statue of Achilles.

Rise, then, round us, ye odours of Provence; rustle, silks; gleam, satins; and let softest music fill the air! Let the beauty of two centuries pass before me, spiritualised by memory. Old Q.C.'s known to me in youth, trot towards me gravely and digestively through the Piccadilly arch. Fair faces, more beautiful in memory than even in life, appear again and smile at me ghostfully from the dream windows of dream carriages. Brave fellows, stretched long ago to rest under Crimean snow-drift and Affghan rock, lean again on the rails at the beginning of the Row, and watch with keen bright eyes and frank radiant faces the matrimonial hunting-field of the season. Old companions, of soft spring afternoons, pace once more under the tender leaves of the young trees, and watch Vanity Fair rolling by like a babbling river; love and greed, pride and hope, virtue and wickedness, saint and sinner, Cato and Bufo, honesty and scoundrelism, banker and swindler, hero and poltroon, wise and foolish, Jew bill-discounter and duke, appear again—all ye phases of the hydra-headed life of London. Dandies of two centuries, dead lions of many epochs, we will paint you as you lived, and, winding up once more your rusty clockwork, send the puppets of society again cantering on the old ride, parading down the old promenade, chatting under the old trees. From Beau Fielding to Beau Brummel, from Tiger Roach to Romeo Coates, the dry butterflies of two centuries shall be taken out of their cases, revived, cast up again for a moment or two into the Hyde-Park air, and compelled to flutter and show their coloured plumes for the amusement of a race that saw them not, *and has all but forgotten their existence.*

But even gossip should be arranged in sequence ; even anecdotes must be vertebrated : so we will return to the earliest history of the Park. After Henry VIII. snatched it in his rough greedy way from the monks of Westminster, the spot long remained a private deer-park ; passers-by on the Hounslow and Uxbridge roads catching only green glimpses of leafy recesses, and momentary twinkles of passing antlers. In the record of court amusements mention is occasionally found of the quiet untrodden place. In 1550 (Edward VI.) the young king, that sweet babe of grace, went on his big horse hunting with hound and horn to amuse the French ambassador ; and in 1578 (Elizabeth) Duke Casimir of Poland, was placed at a special stand-point in the Park, from whence, as three hundred deer trooped past in a frightened herd, he singled out a barren doe, shown him by the keeper, and killed her with a bullet from his arquebus ; to his great *kudos*, and the delight of all the Osrics and court-parasites of the day. No doubt the Virgin Queen, famous for her quick eye and skill with the crossbow, also showed her prowess here, and often let fly her shaft.

In 1652 the Parliament, contemptuous of kings and kingly property, laid hands on the Park to recoup the nation for the expensive war into which a faithless ruler had led it. The Park was sold for about 17,000*l.*, and the deer for 765*l.* 6*s.* 2*d.* It consisted at that time of 620 acres, fenced in ; extending eastward to Park-lane, and westward almost to Kensington Palace. It was mere wood and pasture, with the exception of Tyburn Corner, the deer enclosure, the old lodge at Hyde-Park Corner, and the Banqueting House.

During the civil wars the Parliamentary pikemen and musketeers had their rendezvous in the Park ; Essex and Lambert pitched their tents there, and there Cromwell mustered the Ironsides, who, he vowed, had never been defeated, and whose swords made such mincemeat of the drunken plundering rascals who disgraced the Cavalier cause. In 1642 the staunch London citizens threw up a strong fort, with four bastions, at the south-east corner of the Park. This was on the spot where Hamilton-place now is ; at Mount-street stood the outwork called "Oliver's Mount." The brave Puritan citizens worked like Romans ; gangs of thousands helped with spade, shovel, and pickaxe to bulwark London against Rupert's men and Newcastle's "lambs." Felt-makers, cappers, shoe-makers, porters—all helped ; the Common Council turned to, and even ladies of rank helped to shovel and wheel with their own soft white hands—as Butler said, sneeringly, in *Hudibras*,

"From ladies down to oyster-wenches,
Laboured like pioneers in trenches."

Lady Middlesex, Lady Foster, Lady Anne Walker, and Mrs. Dunch, were conspicuous among these heroines.

Maying—a pretty country custom, so beautifully immortalised by the poet Herrick—was a great occasion for festivity in Hyde Park. *Lads and lasses came to collect green boughs, and carry them back*

in procession, with carols and dances. The sterner Puritans looked with horror upon this outburst of youth, and called the pleasant spring carnival (sometimes abused, no doubt, as all good things may be) "a wicked meeting of fiddlers, leading to drunkenness, ribaldry, and the like." In May 1654 there was special resort to the Maying, with many hundreds of coaches, and gallants in attire, "most shameful powdered-hair men, and painted and spotted (patched) women." A few days after, Cromwell, who was a true English country gentleman in his heart, and loved horse-racing and hunting, came to the Park with his Privy Council, to witness a great game at bowls (or football) by one hundred Cornish gentlemen, fifty of a side. The ball was silver, and to be given to those who won the goal. The one side played in red caps, the other in white.

In 1654, four years before his lamented death, Cromwell met with a dangerous accident in the Park, to the intense delight of the ribald writers of Cavalier lampoons and street-ballads. The Earl of Oldenberg had given the Lord Protector six handsome Friesland horses. Cromwell, always fond of the fresh air after the close fumes of council-chambers, ordered his dinner to be brought into the Park, and there dined *al fresco*, in company with honest Secretary Thurlow and a few of his gentlemen, servants, and guard (janizaries the Cavaliers called them). Being fond of driving, Cromwell then determined to try his new team himself, and, putting Thurlow inside the carriage, off he drove, pretty handsomely for some time, till, provoking the horses too much with the whip, they grew unruly, and tore away at such a pace that the postilion could not hold them in. Presently came a special jolt, his highness was flung off the coach-box across the pole, his foot entangled in the harness, he was dragged for some distance, and while in this danger a pistol went off in his pocket. At last, however, the old soldier got his foot clear, and he rolled craftily out of the reach of the wheels of the ponderous Juggernaut of a state-coach, and so escaped. He was carried home by his guard and the groom, and after some rest gradually recovered. Thurlow leaped out of the coach, and hurt his ankle, so that for that week all state business and Dutch negotiation were suspended.

Hyde Park had been before this a place of ill omen to Cromwell, for it was here that that stern Fifth-Monarchy man, Syndercombe, had planned his assassination, and had even filed through the hinges of the gates, to be ready to take horse and escape. Syndercombe killed himself in prison, and made no confession; but after this, and Colonel Titus's terrible book *Killing no Murder*, Cromwell seems to have been constantly apprehensive of attempts on his life.

Till the Restoration, fees were exacted by the "farmers" from all persons entering the Park. Evelyn mentions with great disgust (11th April 1653) seeing every coach pay a shilling, and every horse sixpence, and abuses "that sordid fellow Anthony Deane, of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields, Esq.," who had purchased the right from the state. A visitor

in 1659 (the year before Charles's return) notices the porters with long staves, who guarded the entrance. The same writer contumeliously describes the Park as a mere "field near the town," the wretched jades and hackney-coaches crowding without "order, equipage, or splendour."

When Charles II. returned, Hyde Park was walled in with brick, and Mr. Hamilton appointed Ranger. He divided the Park into farms, and restocked it with deer. Evelyn, in 1658, describes a coach-race in the Park; and Pepys, that inveterate sight-seer, went there in August 1660, with two friends, in the full flush of his new loyalty, to see a foot-race between an Irishman and Lord Claypole's footman.

It was during a splendid review here at the Restoration that "my Lord Mayor was called aside to be told that Colonel Lambert was passing the Park as a prisoner on his way to Whitehall." Pepys was here again in 1664, when Charles II. was reviewing his horse and foot, to show a French marquis *the goodness* of the English "firemen" (thanks to old Oliver). The sight rather galled Pepys, whose inborn Puritanism on this occasion cropped out once more to the surface. He says the firing was good, though not without a slip now and then, especially one reckless broadside "close to our coach, even to the nearness to be ready to burn our hairs." Yet he says, "methought all these gay men are not the soldiers that must do the king's business, it being such as these that lost the old king all he had, and were beat by the most ordinary fellows there could be." Yes, verily, the sturdy, God-fearing Cromwellian farmers made wild work of the discharged tapsters, broken gamblers, thievish servants, and abandoned rake-hells, that plundered and murdered in the name of King Charles.

Pepys, who loved to taste his steady progress in wealth and honour, has left in his *Diary* several lively records of these moments of true pleasure. 11th of April 1669, he writes: "Hence to the Park, my wife and I, where Sir W. Coventry did first see me and my wife in *a coach of our own*; and so did also this night the Duke of York, who did eye my wife mightily." The same month, on another pleasant afternoon, the important Admiralty official took his fair buxom wife into the Park to see the company. Mr. Pepys carries her to the Lodge, and there in their coach (to prevent the smallest mistake about their having one at last) the worthy couple eat cheesecakes and quaff a tankard of milk. He then drives and shows her the lion of the day, the Prince of Tuscany, and very many fine ladies.

In 1676, Etherege, a man of fashion as well as a clever writer, describes Hyde Park as then preferable to the Mall. De Grammont, an authority on fashionable matters in the reign of Charles II., calls the Park *the promenade* of London. "Nothing," he says, "was so much in fashion during the fine weather as this promenade, which was the rendezvous of fashion and beauty. Everyone, therefore, who had either sparkling eyes or a splendid equipage constantly repaired there, and the king seemed pleased with the place."

The Ring, the fashionable haunt from the Restoration and far into the reigns of the Georges, was situated to the north of the present Serpentine; part of the Ranger's grounds cover its site. A few of the old trees, said to have been planted by Charles II., still remain, but are fast perishing, their black shattered hulls decreasing winter by winter. Near the Ring was the Lodge called the "Great Prince Maurice's Head," and afterwards the "Lake House." A small brook ran in front of it, and the house, with its planked approach, was picturesque.

Colley Cibber, in his sensible and delightful "Apology," says that Kynaston, the actor, told him that when a handsome youth playing female characters, it was the fashion for ladies of quality to take him in their walks to Hyde Park in his theatrical dress. The theatres then opened at four o'clock, so that there was time for a drive before supper. "Now," says Cibber (died 1757), "people at four are going to dinner."

In 1676 (Charles II.), Shadwell, in his play *Epsom Wells*, makes Clodpate sketch the life of the rakes of fashion as drinking till three in the morning, rising at twelve, dressing in the French fashion, going to a play, and then diverting themselves till dusk in Hyde Park. In William III.'s time the same humour continued; the Ring was the market-place of fashion—the Stock-exchange of dandies. There the beauties, past and present, met and abused each other in whispers; there the hero and the gallant came to arrange assignations and rencounters. Southerne (1693) makes Lord Malapert deride the country because it had no Mall, no Opera, and no Hyde Park. Lady Malapert replies wisely, "There are a thousand innocent diversions more wholesome and diverting than always the dusty mill-horse driving in Hyde Park." Lord Malapert replies almost as a modern man of fashion similarly rebuked might reply: "O Lord, don't profane Hyde Park! Is there anything so pleasant as to go there alone and find fault with the company? Why, there can't a horse or a livery 'scape a man that has a mind to be witty;—and there I sell bargains to the orange-women."

In 1695, some fastidious persons of quality being affronted in the Ring by some masked persons in hackney-coaches, an order was issued by the Lords Justices forbidding hackney-coaches and masked persons in the Park. In 1700, Tom Brown, that vigorous but coarse humorist, sketches the Park, and presents it to us in rather a Greenwich-Fair light. There, he says, people coach it, and take the air in a cloud of dust sufficient to choke a foot-soldier, and hindering those from seeing who come on purpose to show themselves; "there a bevy of gallant ladies," he says, "are in glass coaches: some are singing, others laughing, and all of them toying, and devouring cheesecakes, march-pane, and China oranges." The show of coaches that Ben Jonson described in the Park in Charles I.'s time still continued; but the races between English and Irish footmen, &c., as sketched by Shirley the dramatist a little later, seem now to have ceased.

Perhaps not even the sands of Calais, the leafy alleys of the Bois

de Boulogne, or the crisp grass of Chalk Farm, have been so often saturated with human blood as the innocent-looking turf of Hyde Park. In those hot times, when men of fashion carried swords by their sides, and when the chivalrous honour of gentlemen was not to be appeased by costs and money squeezed out by the rack of law-courts, many a hasty word and foolish petulance was cruelly and quickly expiated in the Park. Disputes over the green cloth, disputes on matters of love and gallantry, the injuries of hurt pride or damaged reputation, the wrangles of rival politicians, were here adjusted,—to the bitter misery of wives, sisters, and mothers.

One of the most desperate and deadly of these brave but foolish rencounters took place here on November the 15th, 1712, between the worthless Duke of Hamilton and that unmitigated scoundrel, Lord Mohun. The duke and Mohun, one of the greatest profligates and heartless *roués* of his day, had quarrelled about a Chancery suit, both having claims on the Earl of Macclesfield's estate. Their rival politics probably embittered the dispute; for the duke was a Tory (and therefore a Jacobite) and Master-general of the Ordnance, and Mohun a Whig and member of the famous Kit-Kat Club in Shire-lane, where he had horrified and disgusted Pope's "Left-legged Jacob" (Tonson) by recklessly breaking off the gilded emblem on his chair. "A man who would do that," exclaimed the terrified secretary, "would cut a man's throat!"—so much had Jacob the love of the worshipful club at heart. Indeed, the moment Jacob had seen Lord Mohun and Lord Berkeley enter the room consecrated by Addison and Congreve, Vanbrugh and Halifax, he said he saw the club was going to be ruined.

Years before this, Mohun, steeped in every vice of a profligate age and an abandoned town, had been sharer in a great crime, the indelible infamy of which nothing but death could efface. A drunken, debased friend of his, Captain Hill, on the 9th of December 1692, had planned the abduction of Mrs. Bracegirdle, an actress, then the belle and toast of the town. Hill and his friend Mohun waylaid the actress as she came from supping with a friend in Princes-street, Drury-lane, and, by the aid of six hired soldiers, tried to force her into a coach, wherein Lord Mohun sat with a loaded pistol. A mob, however, gathered angrily, and the two ruffians were forced to decamp. They then had the audacity to go to Mrs. Bracegirdle's house, in Howard-street, Strand, and wait outside drinking, watching for Mountford, an actor of whom Hill was jealous, as he was the favourite lover and hero of the Drury-Lane stage at that time. In spite of all warnings, Mountford unluckily just then happened to pass down the street on his way home, and was confronted by the two men, who had their swords drawn. Hill instantly struck Mountford, and ran him through before he had time to draw his weapon. Poor Mountford died the next day of his wound, acquitting Lord Mohun of any direct participation in the crime. *Hill fled from justice, but Lord Mohun was tried and acquitted.*

The retribution came long after. The duke and Mohun met about seven o'clock on a Saturday morning—a dull, damp, misty November morning in 1712. The duke got out of his coach in the Kensington road, over against Prince's Lodge, and walked with his second, Mr. Macartney, over the wet grass to the left part of the Ring, between the two ponds. After waiting about a quarter of an hour, Lord Mohun and his second, Colonel Hamilton, came up and saluted them. The duke threw off his cloak, Lord Mohun his surtout-coat, and the four men then drew their swords all at once. The two principals exchanged but a few thrusts, when the duke closed and grappled Mohun by the collar. Mohun groaned and fell into a ditch on his back,—it is supposed mortally wounded—the duke fell on him. A groom, walking some horses near, saw Mohun as he fell clutch desperately at the duke's sword. Some keepers ran up with staves to separate the fighters, but too late. The man at Prince's Lodge lifted the duke, who, after staggering about thirty yards, said, "I can walk no farther," sank down and died. Both the bodies were covered with wounds. Mohun was pierced through the stomach, the duke struck in the breast, and an artery in his right arm cut through. There was an unjust suspicion at the time that the mortal blow in each case was given by the seconds. Macartney fled in disgust to the Continent; and Colonel Hamilton then accused him, on oath before the Privy Council, of having stabbed the duke over his (the colonel's) shoulder as he was raising him from the ground. The Whigs, eager to revile a Tory, leaped at the idea. A reward of 500*l.* was issued for his apprehension; and the widowed duchess added 300*l.* more. The Scotch peers invoked Queen Anne to give them the murderer's blood. With a Whig king, however, justice came. Macartney, then a general in Hanover, brought over 6000 troops, when the rebels were at Preston, and soon after this surrendered to the law, was found guilty of manslaughter and discharged.

The Duchess of Hamilton (a diabolical temper, Swift says) was the Narcissa of Pope's bitter and ruthless lines :

"Narcissa's nature, tolerably mild,
To make a wash would hardly stew a child."

She was the daughter of Lord Gerard of Bromley. Pope has etched her with aquafortis:

"Now deep in Taylor and the Book of Martyrs,
Now drinking citron with his grace and Chartres;
Now conscience chills her, and now passion burns,
And atheism and religion take their turns."

When the coach arrived containing the blood-stained body of her husband, this brimstone flew into a rage because the men had placed the body, without her knowledge, on the state-bed, and spoiled the furniture. Swift came that very morning, and stayed two hours. It was a dreadful scene. Two months afterwards the duchess was raging, storming, and railing because Blith, a young Irish dandy, had given a ball in

the duke's house the day the duke died; and, what aggravated the matter, had asked the Marlboroughs. There is a playful and rather profane letter from Pope to the duchess extant among his correspondence. The body of poor worthless Mohun was carried to his house in Great Marlborough-street in the same hackney-coach in which, an hour before, he had started confident and boastful to the Park.

In the year 1758 (George II.), Hyde Park was the scene of a mysterious interview; so remarkable in its results, and leading to so inexplicable a case of disputed identity, as even now at once to excite and baffle curiosity. On the morning of November 18th, 1758, a letter was found under the door of the Ordnance Office, directed, in a hand imitating print, "To his Grace the Duke of Marlborough," then Master-general of that department. The letter was duly delivered, the duke at once opened and read it. It was oracular and threatening, and was to the following effect:

"November 18.

"MY LORD,—As ceremony is an idle thing upon most occasions, more especially to persons in my state of mind, I shall proceed immediately to acquaint you with the motive I have of addressing this epistle to you.

"You are to know, then, my present situation in life is such that I should prefer annihilation to a continuance of it. Desperate diseases require desperate remedies; and you are the man I have pitched upon either to make *me* or unmake yourself.

"As I never had the honour to live among the great, the tenour of my proposals will not be very courtly; but let that be an argument to enforce the belief of what I am going to write.

"It has employed my invention for some time to find out a method of destroying another without exposing my own life. This I have accomplished, and defy the law; now for the application of it.

"I am desperate, and must be provided for. You have it in your power. It is my business to make it your inclination to serve me. You must procure me a genteel support for my life, or your own will be at a period before this session of Parliament is over. I have more motives than one for singling you out upon this occasion; and I give you this fair warning because the means I shall make use of are too fatal to be eluded by the power of physic.

"If you think this of any consequence, you will not fail to meet the author on Sunday next at ten o'clock in the morning, or on Monday (if the weather should be rainy on Sunday), near the first tree beyond the stile in Hyde Park, in the foot-walk to Kensington. Secrecy and compliance may preserve you from a double danger of this sort, as there is a certain part of the world where your death has more than been wished for on other motives.

"I know the world too well to trust this secret in any breast but my own. A few days determine me your friend or enemy. "FELTON.

"You will apprehend that I mean you should be alone, and depend upon it that a discovery of any artifice in this affair will be fatal to you. My safety is insured by my silence, for confession only can condemn me."

The writer evidently was either a Jacobite or pretended to be so. The duke was not to be frightened out of his money. He boldly, like a frank, brave gentleman that he was, went to the spot at the time appointed, having first desired a friend to observe from a distance what passed. The duke waited there on horseback for half-an-hour, then seeing no one that he could suspect to be his correspondent, he turned his horse's head, and rode slowly towards Piccadilly; but after proceeding a few paces, he looked back, still full of curiosity, and there sure enough he saw a suspicious man leaning over a bridge within twenty yards of the specified tree. He then rode gently towards the person, and passed him once or twice, expecting him to speak. The man still remaining silent, his grace bowed with the grave formality of the age, and asked him if he had not something to say to him. The man replied quite calmly,

"No; I don't know you."

The duke wore no special dress; but he had the star by his side and his pistols in his holsters, the common horse-furniture of a military officer of high rank. The duke said to the stranger,

"I am the Duke of Marlborough. Now you know who I am, I imagine you have something to say to me."

On the man again replying, "I have not," his grace turned and rode straight out of the Park.

A few days after, a second letter from the anonymous scoundrel, in the same feigned handwriting, and to the following purpose, was thrust under the office-door of the duke:

"MY LORD,—You receive this as an acknowledgment of your punctuality as to the time and place of meeting on Monday last, though it was owing to you that it answered no purpose. The pageantry of being armed and the insignia of your order were useless and too conspicuous; you needed no attendant; the place was not calculated for mischief, nor was any intended.

"If you walk on the west side of Westminster Abbey towards eleven o'clock on Sunday next, your sagacity will point out the person, whom you will address by asking his company to take a turn or two with you. You will not fail on inquiry to be acquainted with his name and place of abode, and according to which directions you will please to send two or three hundred-pound bank-notes the next day by the penny post.

"Exert not your curiosity too early: it is in your power to make me grateful on certain terms. I have friends who are faithful, but they do not bark before they bite.—I am, &c.

F."

A man of the cold Wellington stamp would have treated such a miserable swindler with silence and contempt; would have gone about armed and attended by an armed groom; would have kept a pistol ready by the side of his office-standish, and that is all. But in those restless Jacobite times conspiracies were too frequent and wide-spread and dangerous not to be dreaded even by the bravest. A man could not be sure even of his own brother. There was scarcely a courtier at St. James's but was "hedging" in case of the Pretender's success.

The duke grew alarmed at the stealthy persistency of the mysterious rascal. He consulted his friends and Sir John Fielding, the celebrated blind police-magistrate and a relation of the novelist. It was planned that his grace should go to Westminster Abbey. Two or three constables were ordered to be near the spot, dressed as visitors intent upon seeing the monuments. They were to arrest any suspected person on a signal from the duke.

His grace had not been five minutes in the Abbey before the fellow he had seen in the Park entered, accompanied by a good-looking decent man. They walked together towards the choir and then parted.

The duke's correspondent then loitered round looking at the inscriptions, and occasionally fixing his eyes on his grace, who stood for a few minutes near him to see if he would be the first to speak; but as he remained silent, the duke said:

"Have you anything to say to me, sir?"

The man replied, "No, my lord, I have not."

"Sure you haven't?"

But the man still answered, "No, my lord."

They then both walked up different sides of the aisle for six or seven minutes, when the Duke of Marlborough left by the great door. One of the disguised constables observed that as the duke went out, the man placed himself behind a pillar, and looked eagerly after him.

The duke was still, however, unwilling to arrest a person who might be innocent, and took no further proceedings in the matter at that time. A few days afterwards, however, he received a third letter, which was as follows:

"MY LORD,—I am fully convinced you had a companion on Sunday. I interpret it as owing to the weakness of human nature, and such proceeding is far from being ingenuous, and may produce bad effects; whilst it is impossible to answer the end proposed.

"You will see me again soon, as it were by accident, and may easily find where I go to. In consequence of which, by being sent to, I shall wait on your grace, but expect to be quite alone and to converse in whispers. You will likewise give your honour upon meeting that no part of our conversation transpire.

"These and the former terms complied with insure: my revenge, in case of non-compliance or any scheme to expose me, will be slower,

but not less sure ; and strong suspicion the utmost that can possibly ensue upon it ; while the chances would be tenfold against yourself.

"You will possibly be in doubt after the meeting ; now it is quite necessary the outside should be a mask to the in. The family of the Bloods is not extinct, though they are not in my scheme."

In what an inspired tone the vermin writes ! what a grave business transaction he makes of his villany ! For two months after this the duke was let alone. At the end of that time he received the following letter by the penny-post, written in a mean and a different hand, and evidently on a new tack :

"To his Grace the Duke of Marlborough. May it please your Grace,—I have reason to believe that the son of one Barnard, a surveyor, in Abingdon-buildings, Westminster, is acquainted with some secrets that nearly concern your safety. His father is now out of town, which will give you an opportunity of questioning him more privately.

"It would be useless to your grace, as well as dangerous to me, to appear more publicly in this affair.—Your sincere friend,

"ANONYMOUS.

"He frequently goes to Storey's-gate Coffee-house."

In the course of a week the cautious duke sent a messenger to the coffee-house, who there found Mr. Barnard. He appeared surprised at being sent for, and said, "It is very odd, for the duke addressed himself to me some time ago in Hyde Park, though I never saw him before in my life."

A day or two afterwards, according to appointment, he came to the duke at Marlborough House. The duke instantly recognised him as the man of the Park and the Abbey. He again said, "Have you anything to say ?"

The man again replied, "Nothing."

The duke then read the letters, and recapitulated all the circumstances, particularly the reference to Barnard's knowledge of important secrets.

Barnard merely replied, "I know nothing of the matter."

The duke observed, that the writer of such letters must be a man of abilities and education, and regretted he should be guilty of so mean an action.

Barnard's suspicious answer was : "*It is possible to be very poor and yet very learned ;*" and on the duke's saying, "There must be something very odd about the man," Barnard replied, "I imagine he must be mad."

"He seems surprised that I should have pistols," continued the duke.

Barnard replied, "*I was surprised to see your grace with pistols, and your star on.*"

"Why were you surprised at that ?"

the author of these letters, as it is an attempt to blast your
letter."

Barnard smiled meaningly, bowed, and took his leave. He was
after taken into custody, and tried under the Black Act at the
Hilary Sessions in May 1758. Serjeant Davy, originally a bankrupt
at Exeter, and known as a notorious browbeater and bullier
in the law, was the chief counsel for the prosecution; but the duke
insisted on his not trying to confuse or entangle the rival witnesses.
The duke was merciful and the judge impartial. There could be no
doubt that Barnard had written all the letters, and that the whole was
a well-laid scheme to extort money, probably under pretence of dis-
covering some of the Jacobite proclivities of the duke's father, the great
duke. Yet there were some most curious and apparently extenuating
circumstances in favour of the artful prisoner. He proved that on the day he was
in the Park his father had sent him to Kensington on business.
Being in the Abbey, Mr. Greenwood, his companion there—a man
of good credit—proved that he had that morning with difficulty per-
suaded Barnard to walk from Abingdon-buildings to the Park. They
had no intention of visiting the Abbey, but on the way Greenwood
discovered a new monument he had not seen, and insisted on their
going that way. Many persons of fortune and reputation appeared,
and testified to Barnard's regularity, sobriety, and success in business.
Several gentlemen also deposed to having dined with him at Kensington
on the day mentioned. They had heard him speak with wonder of
how he had twice met the Duke of Marlborough, and of the singularity of
the address addressed by him. The prisoner was acquitted. After his
circumstances transpired—especially a dishonourable transaction

A REMONSTRANCE

"All life whatsoever is but a chaos of infirmities; and whoso will reprehend must either be a god amongst men without fault, or a byword to men for his foul tongue."

Captain Shandon to the Editor of the "Pall-Mall Gazette."

SIR,—When untimely death takes a man from the friends he loves and the places that have been familiar and dear to him, his spirit still hovers over the walks he trod in the flesh, and, from the darksome shore where he stalks joyless and unquiet amongst kindred ghosts, he looks back to that busy world where he once had a place, and notes with interest the great conflict from which he has been withdrawn. And as the fond father, from his lonesome wanderings in the undiscovered country, turns with looks of yearning to the children he has left behind him, so the man of letters watches the literary bantling from which grim death reft him, eager to see how the frail nursling fares in stranger hands. From this land of shadows, I, Charles Shandon, survey with looks of wonder the dealings of a class of men whom I was once proud to call my brothers. Alas, they have changed sadly since that day; and there are some among them now whose hands no honest man would care to take in friendship.

The old times and the old troubles come back to me, and I fancy myself sitting in the little room in the Fleet prison—sure 'twas pleasant times we had there in those days; and it grieves me to see the place is gone, and shabby hoardings and tawdry flaunting bills disfigure the old walls, behind which I once found no unpleasant home. I fancy myself sitting there, I say, with a desk on my knee, writing for dear life; while my wife looks up from her work every now and then—poor patient soul!—and little Mary plays with Pendennis's watch-chain; and noble Warrington scowls at me from under his dark thoughtful brows; and Bungay the publisher waits impatient to hear my prospectus of the *Pall-Mall Gazette*.

I'll own, sir, I was a little proud of that prospectus; and I think of it still with as much satisfaction as a ghost can feel in the petty triumphs of the life that is over. It had the genuine ring; and there are not many among your literary hacks nowadays who could write such a sentence as that which Pendennis pronounced the crowning beauty of the composition. "We address ourselves to the higher circles of society; we care not to disown it. The *Pall-Mall Gazette* is written by gentlemen for gentlemen; its conductors speak to the classes in which they live and were born. The field-preacher has his journal; the radical free-thinker has his journal—why should the gentlemen of England be unrepresented in the Press?"

Now, sir, there was of course some little of the tradesman's trick and bombast in this splendid paragraph; but I protest, on my honour, that when I wrote it I meant to keep this promise; and I believe that the *Pall-Mall Gazette*, while under my direction, rarely outstepped the limits which a gentleman prescribes for himself even when he is most acrimonious. The names of such contributors as Warrington and Pendennis were, indeed, a sufficient guarantee for the carrying out of intentions somewhat boldly put forth in my prospectus. Those two young men were gentlemen by birth and education. We had not yet come to the flippancy and self-conceit of the semi-educated journalist. We were often bitter. We had our pet antipathies and our trade interests; but we were always gentlemen; and when it pleased us to hate anybody, we gave utterance to our hatred in a decent and gentleman-like manner.

These, sir, were the tactics of the *Pall-Mall Gazette* while conducted by your humble servant.

What, sir, shall I say of it now?—Can I call it a journal written by gentlemen for gentlemen? Not content, Mr. Editor, with having perloined that noble sentence of which I was so justly proud, you are doing all you have the power to do to change it into a byword and a reproach. A journal written by gentlemen for gentlemen, quotha! A bundle of cuttings from other papers, garnished with flippant and frivolous comment; and little carping, spiteful paragraphs; and prurient harpings upon subjects that decency best reprobates by decent avoidance; and sham letters from sham correspondents, all breathing the same malignant feeling against some one or something respected by other people; and, to give spice to the whole, an occasional forgery.

This, sir, is the journal written by gentlemen for gentlemen, which you conduct, and which I peruse with unutterable regret.

Now, sir, I am not going to plead the cause of a certain Mr. Babington White, whose book you have chosen to condemn. The right of the critic to his opinion is indisputable; whether it be the *Edinburgh Review*, which is pleased to laugh at Mr. Wordsworth; or the *Quarterly*, which must have its joke about young Mr. Tennyson; or the united critics of France, who band themselves together to laugh down and extinguish M. Hugo and the romantic school which he has inaugurated; or the "Highflyers at Buttons," who prefer Mr. Tickell's *Iliad* to Mr. Pope's popular version of the same epic;—the critic for the moment is omnipotent, the Imperator of literature, supreme in the exercise of self-assumed and irresponsible power. But when you outstep the limits of criticism to carry on a crusade, not against the writer of the work you dislike, but against the Lady who conducts the Magazine in which the work appeared, I declare that you are guilty of a paltry and cowardly proceeding, eminently calculated to bring lasting discredit on the journal you edit, the proprietors of which are, I fear, unaware of the harm your foolish zeal is likely to inflict upon their property.

We will begin at the beginning, sir, if you please, and review this tilting match against a literary windmill. In the first place you criticise Mr. White's book, and stigmatise, as a dishonest translation, a novel, founded on a French drama, from which source the English writer has taken only the broad idea of his characters, and the general bearing and moral of his story. But then he has translated about half a page of the French writer's dialogue, that half-page being the keynote of his theme, and he has thus enabled you to quote a parallel passage, and by a little clever manipulation to make it appear to your readers (who, you speculate, are not acquainted with the French drama) that the whole work is a mere translation, or, in your less guarded assertion, "a novel stolen from the French." This, sir, is a specimen of the sham-sample system, in which the malevolent critic plagiarises the artifice of the dishonest chapman. Mr. Babington White may boldly proclaim his right to take his inspiration from a foreign source, as the greatest writers have done before him; and whether his book be good or bad, there is no man of letters who will deny the justice of his plea. You have demanded that this writer should "come forward," or be "produced," for your satisfaction. Where, sir, is your pillory? Where your tribunal? By what right, sir, do you ask to know more of any author than the book which it is your pleasure to review, and the name on the title-page of that book? Mr. White may elect to claim the privilege exercised by Junius; for in the republic of letters there is no license accorded to the greatest which does not belong to the least. If he is to be heard of in the future, his quality will be best proved by the work which shall bear his name: if he is to return to the obscurity from which your clamorous censures have lifted him, it can be no more necessary for you to know what manner of man he is than it is necessary for him to discover the name of that accomplished critic who, in truculence of temper and choice of diction, resembles rather the Jeffreys of the Bloody Assize than the caustic chief of the *Edinburgh Review*.

But now, sir, we come to a very different kind of journalism; and I blush to find that the history of the newspaper press, like other histories, repeats itself, and that the days of the *Age* and the *Satirist* seem to be coming back to us. You receive, or in some manner become possessed of, a letter purporting to be written by Miss Braddon—a letter so obviously absurd, that an editor who could allow it to appear without some previous inquiry as to its authenticity must be, indeed, alike anxious to inflict injury and reckless of the reputation of his journal. The letter appears, however; and the next day appears another letter, with an anonymous signature, hinting that the book you had condemned was not written by Mr. Babington White, but by a popular lady novelist. And in your next impression appears a third letter, in which a clerk's error is twisted into an attempt at falsification, and in which a bookbinder's blunder is taken advantage of for the misspelling of Mr. Babington White's name; and from this time forward

it is to be observed that your subtle sense of humour exhibits itself in the uniform mis-spelling of this writer's name, the writing of which with two *b*'s instead of one appears to you in the light of a very exquisite joke, and, indeed, a complete extinction of Mr. White and his literary pretensions; just as I have no doubt the adherents of Richard Plantagenet thought they gave the finishing stroke to all claims of Henry VII. when they described him as "one Henry Tidder." It appears, sir, that Miss Braddon is only informed of what is going on after the publication of this third foolish letter. She writes immediately to inform you that the letter purporting to bear her signature is a forgery.

Now, sir, what would be the first impulse of a "gentleman" upon discovering that by any carelessness of his he had inflicted on a lady the serious wrong involved in the publication of a very foolish letter? and, moreover, a letter which, had the public been in any way dissatisfied with the Magazine she conducts—and it would appear happily they are not—might have inflicted real trouble and annoyance upon her in her capacity of Editor. Would not the gentleman writing for gentlemen hasten to apologise for his unwitting furtherance of a malicious plot, and would he not take immediate steps to discover the spiteful blockhead who had put this cheat upon him? Such, sir, was not your conduct. You positively abstain from any expression of regret that your paper should have been made the vehicle of private malice; and with unparalleled audacity you tell Miss Braddon that it would better have become her to write the letter which she did not write, or, in other words, that the malicious blockhead who forged her signature possessed a finer sense of honour than the lady herself! And then, sir, Miss Braddon, with natural indignation, writes to offer a reward of one hundred guineas for the discovery of the forger, and she calls upon you to reciprocate her offer. This letter you suppress, and this offer you ridicule. Mr. Babington White, whose only real offence, if offence it be (?), is that he has founded an English novelette on a French drama, is, you say, a far more reprehensible person than the spiteful blockhead who forged a lady's signature to a ridiculous letter, in the hope of placing her in a false position with the subscribers to *Belgravia* and the public generally.

And then, sir, when the voice of the Press shouts in your ear that your conduct is discreditable to journalism, you are goaded into a feeble expression of being "very sorry," and you precede this tardy piece of repentance by asserting that you have no machinery applicable to trace out the dastardly forgery. You forget, sir, that your employer is a publisher and the owner of a rival magazine to the *Belgravia*. If his signature was forged, is there no machinery by which he would essay to discover the forger? Would he be content to do nothing? It appears, sir, that your machinery is at the ready service of the scoundrel who forged Miss Braddon's signature, and that you can print and re-

print the felonious document just as your caprice dictates; and thus your machinery can repeat the annoyance, to this it is quite equal; but you have no machinery that will throw any light upon, or assist in any way to drag to justice, the miscreant who deals in forgery, and who is so conveniently on the alert for an opportunity. Whenever, sir, your own signature—that of Frederick Greenwood, editor of the *Cornehill Magazine*—shall be forged, as Miss Braddon's has been, with the same malicious intent to injure the Magazine you conduct, then, no doubt, you will find some machinery to trace out the wrong-doer, and make him amenable to the criminal law.

Your next editorial disregard of duty, sir, is worthy of all that has gone before. The same spiteful blockhead who palmed upon you the forged letter now imposes upon your simplicity a preposterous advertisement, published in a Utrecht paper on Thursday September 26th,* and this absurdity, without any authentication or guarantee, you quote and comment upon in your journal of Saturday the 28th. Sharp work this, Mr. Editor, and suggestive too! It is not difficult for the conspirator who inserted the advertisement to contrive to give notice of its appearance in anticipation of the ordinary postal delivery; and it is a fact not generally known, that a newspaper published in Utrecht on Thursday does not reach the General Post-office in London until Saturday. But what can I say of the editor who unconsciously lends himself to so pitiful an affair! And the cause of all this plotting and counter-plotting, the forgery, the anonymous letters, the spurious advertisement from a Dutch newspaper, the wilful suppression of Miss Braddon's letters, is to show—what? Only that Mr. Babington White derived the characters in his story from a French drama, and did not consider himself bound to blazon the fact upon his title-page any more than William Makepeace Thackeray considered himself bound to tell the world that he derived the broad idea of his wonderful Becky Sharp, with her tricks and lies and fascinations, and elderly adorer, and sheep-dog companion, from the Madame de Marneffe of Honoré de Balzac; or any more than that great writer's accomplished daughter is bound to proclaim that the pre-Raphaelite word-painting for which she has been so highly commended is a trick of style exactly identical with, if not directly derived from, the style of Gustave Flaubert.

Why, sir, if you better knew the literature you profess to represent, you would better understand the silliness of this childish outcry; you would know that Le Sage borrowed the plan of his *Diable Boiteux* from the Spanish of Guevara, and that he derived the materials of *Gil*

* The Editor of the paper refuses, in his issue for October 15, to state from whom he received this mendacious advertisement, and he declines to give any aid to trace home the anonymous concoction. It is hoped, however, that either the Burgomaster of Utrecht, or the solicitor to her Majesty's Consul at Amsterdam, will eventually unravel this unprincipled sequence to the forgery of Miss Braddon's name.

Blas from the Spanish drama; you would know that, without acknowledgment or sense of compunction, Sterne took whole pages *verbatim* from Rabelais, and helped himself with a very free hand to the gems of erudition and quaint conceits which he found in Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*; you would know that Molière, in a notorious sentence, confessed to taking his material wherever he found it. I daresay the little carping critics of Grub-street had their fling at the Yorkshire parson who wrote *Tristram Shandy*—the chief characters of which, by the way, Lord Lytton reproduced, regenerated, and ennobled in his immortal *Caxtons*. Yet who protests? who dares to shout "literary thief" here? No doubt Vadius and Trissotin found plenty to say about the dishonesty of Jean-Baptiste Poquelin, alias Molière. And yet, sir, I would rather have an ounce of Molière's genius, or a pennyweight of Laurence Sterne's wit, than a pound of your honesty, marketable as the commodity may be; or of that keen sense of honour which permitted you to record the experiences of a spy who did not disdain to misrepresent himself as "a man on strike," and who did not scruple to hob and nob with the deceived journeymen tailors, in order to give the world at large, and the master tailors in particular, the benefit of knowledge obtained by that petty treason.

I doubt, sir, if you know how much you promised when you so boldly appropriated the best sentence in my prospectus. A journal written by gentlemen for gentlemen! Have you any idea what that implies? and can you for a moment imagine that gentlemen write, or that gentlemen care to read, such stuff as you have written, or caused to be written, upon this Babington-White question? Is it the part of a gentleman to deal in imputations that he cannot maintain, to give ear to the backstairs gossip of a printing-office, or take his crude information from some underhand source, and then, after making his charge by means of hints and innuendoes, to suppress the letter that calls upon him to substantiate his accusation? Is it the part of a gentleman to war against a woman, or to give ridiculous prominence to an insignificant matter in order to injure a trade rival? No, sir: if ever you are so happy as to fall into the society of gentlemen, you will discover that urbanity is the distinguishing mark of a gentleman's conduct; and that a courteous reverence for womankind—whether it be my Lady Mary in her chariot going to St. James's Palace in all her glory of diamonds and court-plumes, or only poor Molly the housemaid scrubbing her master's door-step—is a sentiment at once innate and inextinguishable in a gentleman's mind.

Go to school, Mr. Editor, and learn what it is to be a gentleman. Learn of Addison and Steele, whose papers are models of all that is gentle and gentlemanly in literature. Observe with how light a rod those elegant writers chastise the follies of their age. Remark how wide their sympathies, how inexhaustible their good humour, how dignified their sarcasm, how polished their wit. And understand from

these qualities how it happened that those papers, designed for the amusement of an idle hour in the day that gave them to the town, have become the standard of taste in journalism, and the delight of intellectual mankind. Learn of Jeffrey and of Brougham, those masters of critical sword-play, who had no need to fall to fisticuffs, like dirty little boys in the gutter, in order to belabour the object of their antipathy. Those gentlemen, sir, were the high-priests of literature: they offered up their victim with something of the solemnity attending a pious sacrifice; and, as the leper-priest of the mediæval legend felt his leprosy leave him at the moment when he offered the supreme sacrifice, so these masters of the art of criticism banished from their minds all party spirit and all personal feeling while engaged in the performance of their self-assumed function. Above all, sir, study the writings of William Makepeace Thackeray, from whose great mind you derived the title which your mistaken policy has so degraded.

As for the Lady whom you have attacked, I do not think she need fear any ill results from your malevolence. Adverse criticism loses its power to sting from the moment in which it ceases to be disinterested. Do you think the friends and readers of Alexander Pope valued his genius any the less after reading the libels of Lord Hervey? No, sir; they only thought that my lord hated the poet very furiously, and expressed his antipathy in very poor and feeble language. The town may possibly have derived some small entertainment from the *Epistle to a Doctor of Divinity from a Nobleman at Hampton Court*; but the lordling's silly rhymes can have robbed the poet of no single admirer. Miss Braddon, I imagine, has no higher aspiration than to please that novel-reading public which has hitherto applauded and encouraged her efforts to amuse its leisure hours; and I am sure her readers will not withdraw their support from her because she has been made the subject of a most unmanly attack in a journal which professes to be written by gentlemen for gentlemen. The English mind, sir, is quick to resent anything that savours of persecution; and if you have the interests of your paper at heart, you will do well in future to refrain from these noisy onslaughts upon popular female novelists; which are more characteristic of the disappointed author of two or three unappreciated novels than of the gentleman editor who writes for gentlemen readers.

I have the honour to be, sir,

Your predecessor and humble servant,

CHARLES SHANDON.

Hades, October 1867.

A FORTNIGHT IN CORSICA

Of the thousands of travellers in search of health and amusement who reach Marseilles, and thence proceed along the glorious Mediterranean coast to hybernate at Hyères, Cannes, Nice, or St. Remo, or take these towns on their way to Spezia and Genoa, the number of those who see and recognise the blue mountains of Corsica is very small. Those, also, who are not afraid of venturing on the treacherous Gulf of Lyons, and who proceed from Marseilles to Leghorn, Civita Vecchia, Naples, or Malta, may distinguish the outline of the island ; but they certainly see no more of it. Thus it happens that this island, which is of no contemptible size, and which is sufficiently remarkable in classical, mediæval, and modern history—which, under more favourable circumstances, might yield crops of corn and various fruits, helping largely to supply Europe with food—which enjoys a climate always remarkable for its equability, and unsurpassed in winter—should be actually less known and less visited than scores of less important and less interesting spots, which owe their reputation to being situated on or near a great highway.

And yet there is nothing difficult in a trip to Corsica. Bastia, its commercial capital, is only twenty-four hours from Marseilles, twelve hours from Nice, and little more than six from Leghorn. Ajaccio, the political capital, is about the same distance from Marseilles and Nice, though farther from Leghorn. At both towns there is fair accommodation. The people are hospitable, and especially well inclined to the English visitors who may honour them with a visit ; and who have not yet been sufficiently numerous to destroy the *prestige* our countrymen certainly enjoy, and which dates from the time when the island for a short time was under the protection of England.

But, though easily reached, Corsica is not to be seen in a day ; nor will a week's hard work exhaust the list of its notabilia. Within a few years it has been encircled and crossed by good roads ; but the island is so very large in proportion to its population that both roads and lands run a risk of being overtaken by the rapid approaches of nature ; for, owing to various causes, though chiefly to the rarity of travellers, the thinness of the population, and the simple habits of the islanders, there are only a few tolerable inns in the chief towns, and none elsewhere. Owing, also, to the mountainous ridge that traverses the whole length of the island, the eastern shore is almost entirely cut off from the western ; and, except the old-fashioned diligence, which *rumbles on from hour to hour and from day to day with its living*

freight, there is really no means of moving from one place to another. Naturally and properly enough also, the roads are constructed so as to secure the easiest communication—not to command the best points of view. Thus the objects of greatest interest are almost as inaccessible as ever, and the towns may be visited without the country being seen.

And Corsica is a shy beauty. The distant glimpses of its mountains tell the traveller of bold and grand scenery; for the mountains are exceedingly lofty and generally snow-capped, and they present a formidable range from Bonifacio Straits in the south to Cap de Corse in the north, a distance of a hundred and twenty miles. But little is seen of these mountains by those who travel by the diligence or otherwise along the high-roads. The only two towns worthy of the name are on the coast; Bastia on the east, and Ajaccio on the west. There are besides these a very few other small towns, of comparatively modern growth, near the sea, and a still fewer and smaller number of towns some little way up the valleys, where, during the Middle Ages, the inhabitants were safe from the ravages of pirates. The roads, with the exception of two, are carried along the plains and near the sea. Thus the island may easily be visited without the traveller being much the wiser for his visit.

It is true that these facts are not generally known; for so little is Corsica thought of as a place for tourists that it has generally been altogether excluded both from French and Italian guide-books; and this is not to be wondered at, for the accounts to be obtained from books are not such as to entice many to cross the sea to verify them. It is impossible to conceal the fact that there have been serious drawbacks to Corsican travel—one of which, at any rate, remains. In this island, more than in any other part of Europe, pestilence still walks about at noonday; for six months of the year it is death to sleep in the plains, and merely to travel across them at that time involves serious risk of that terrible scourge, malaria fever. Thus, although the brigandage and violence that once kept away strangers have disappeared, the far worse scourge that afflicts the natives as well as strangers remains. On the richest lands in Europe, where the heaviest and most luxurious crops might easily be grown, there is no population to sow the seed or cut the crop when ripened. On the mountains the most magnificent forest-trees grow and decay, because there is not energy enough to cut the timber and convey it to a market.

But, after all, Corsica is well worth a visit at any time between November and May, and there is really no difficulty or trouble involved in the trip; nor at that time is there any danger from the climate, which is, on the contrary, during the winter months, the most equable and pleasant in Europe. The accommodation also is very tolerable, and involves no serious annoyance. Inns will be found, not only in the two capitals of Bastia and Ajaccio, but at one or two of the smaller towns. A network of excellent roads, nearly completed, runs all round

the island, crossing it in two directions, and there is a service of good old-fashioned diligences; steamers also touch at many of the ports. The language of the people is Italian, but French is spoken everywhere; and there is no reason why, at the proper season, there should not be a great deal more communication than there is between Corsica and the Continent. The best season for travelling is limited to the months of March, April, and May, when the days are of fair length; but those who desire to winter at Ajaccio should arrive there at the end of November. October and November are the months of heavy rains, and when they are well over the whole of the island is quite safe from fever till June. From June to November the east coast cannot be approached with safety; and the western shore is dangerous, though less unhealthy than the east.

Corsica is a large island. It is nearly 120 miles from north to south, and for a great distance more than 40 miles wide. A great and lofty chain of mountains runs through it as a backbone from north to south, and gives off long and important spurs, which stretch far into the plains and render the interior singularly inaccessible. The lowest passes across from any part of the east to any part of the west coast are nearly two thousand feet high, and so steep that all communication is difficult and slow. Railroads exist not. They are only hoped for, and not even projected; so that, in this respect, Corsica is behind her sister Sardinia. A long diligence journey, continued through the night, is not one of the luxuries generally desired in travelling since railroads have become common; and, indeed, from the diligence little or nothing is seen of the country. Horses and mules may be had for the interior, but thirty or forty miles a day is all that can be done in this way; and as towns, or even villages, are not located at convenient intervals, there is but a gloomy prospect even for the lover of the picturesque. Post-horses can, however, be had and carriages hired by those who would see the fine road and glorious forests between Bastia and Ajaccio.

Bastia is half modern and tame, half picturesque and mediæval. The old town is built on a slope, and at the top of the height, from whose defensible position and fortification (*bastione*) it takes its name, is the most interesting part. There are several steep narrow streets—some of them busy enough, especially on market-day—but there are no buildings of architectural interest. The town ends abruptly on the summit and edge of a steep cliff. The new town is on the sea-shore, and is connected with the old by a good street. The whole style is that of Italian rather than French towns. This newer town, when the mole now in construction is finished, will have a fair-sized and convenient artificial harbour. The buildings of the new town are lofty and handsome, the streets wide and regular, and the great piazza of St. Nicolas open towards the sea is adorned with a fine heroic statue of the great Napoleon. The glorious view from this piazza across the

Mediterranean, with Elba and Pianosa in the distance, leaves nothing to be desired.

Just outside Bastia, to the south, one of the great lagoons—the plague-spots of Corsica—communicates lazily with the sea by a small narrow passage, often choked up. This is the first of a long series of similar but smaller lagoons, extending along the eastern coast of the island for as much as sixty miles. They are sufficiently remarkable in themselves, and much more so as the source of all that is bad and dangerous in the climate. They are, beyond a doubt, among the most interesting phenomena of their kind; for they have probably been formed, so far as their main characteristics are concerned, within the last thousand years; and their influence in checking the progress and destroying the prosperity of the island is unquestionably of modern date. In the time of the Roman Empire, Sardinia is described by classical writers as malarious; but, though Corsica is often alluded to, there is nothing to suggest in any way that this island was also a dangerous residence. Sardinia remains nearly in the same state, but Corsica is now almost uninhabitable in summer, except in the mountains. Even in the Middle Ages there were certainly large and populous towns on the coast in positions which could not now be occupied because of the malaria. Remains of two of these towns still exist, and stand out with ghostly prominence from the deserted plains.

The lagoons are, for the most part, huge shallow pools of brackish or fresh water, almost separated from the sea by a narrow sandbank, but communicating with the sea by a long narrow channel almost choked up by sand. This is always at the northern end of the lagoon, and generally far beyond its main body towards the north. The map of the east coast of Corsica thus presents the appearance of several pear-shaped sheets of water, the stalks of the pears all lying in one direction; but the maps of half a century ago by no means agree with those of a more ancient date in detail, nor do they represent the lagoons as they now exist. These pear-shaped sheets of water are therefore not permanent. The stalks of the older lagoons are constantly lengthening; newer and younger pools are forming; and every year something is done to alter the outline, except where artificial means are taken to preserve the shore from change. Nowhere is the change taking place on coast-lines more curiously exemplified.

The water of the lagoons is derived from numerous torrents that run from the hill-sides across the plains towards the sea. The mud and sand brought down with the water of the torrents entering the sea is distributed by the waves, and, owing to the prevalence of the southerly and south-easterly winds in the channel between Corsica and Italy, is constantly being blown northwards, and has formed bars across all the natural bays, reducing the existing coast almost to a straight line. These bars become in time sea-walls, shutting in the lagoons. Inasmuch as the torrents at certain seasons are very powerful, and the

water must find its way to the sea, an outlet is always preserved ; but as they (the torrents) only enter the sea during the winter season, and at other times even the rivers are almost dry, there is ample time for the sand to advance. Thus every season the canal of communication becomes longer and longer, until it becomes too long to answer its purpose, or until by some extraordinary flood a breach is made in the sea-wall or barrier. The rest of the canal (the stalk of the pear) may then become the commencement of a new lagoon.

We have only to look back to the history of the coast to measure the rate of progress. There was a time when the principal lagoons were open bays, on whose shores the waves freely washed. At this time all the accumulation of vegetable and animal matter brought down by the torrents was carried away into the open sea, and the air was free from malaria caused by the rotting of all this organic matter. Then the towns on the coast were built and safely inhabited, and the soil of the plains was cultivated, and the crops were exported to Rome to feed the population of the metropolis of the world. A few centuries later the sand-banks, which perhaps even then had obstructed the entrance to these bays, had formed continuous barriers, preventing the free access of the sea. The bays thus became natural basins, with openings to the sea gradually closing up. Still later the barrier of sand was continuous, and only interrupted at the northern extremity ; the basins having become mere pools or lagoons into which the sea entered during summer, but through which the water of the torrents rushed during winter. With the water, however, the streams entering the pool must bring the decaying organic matter, and this has no longer any escape into the open sea. Accumulating during winter, and rotting with the summer heat, we have in this organic matter an ample explanation of all that follows. Malaria is established. The poisoned air drifts over the plains and up the valleys. The population diminishes ; cultivation is at first checked, and then almost ceases ; and the once smiling corn-fields, vineyards, olive-gardens, and orange and lemon groves give place to a wild growth, which, in its turn decaying and carried away into the lagoon, produces fresh poison (exhibited in a rapid growth of *confervæ*), and renders still worse the condition of the air.

Such is the history of these lagoons ; and it is clear that without some great and determined effort they will never be redeemed, and the island must be lost for human purposes.

Corsica is rich in historical reminiscences, and not poor in legendary lore. These, in some cases, are connected by curious links. In the interior of the island among the mountains is a little town or village called Castifao, occupying a curious position on a mountain-side, about 1800 feet above the sea. No two of its houses are on the same level ; there are no two whose walls are in the same straight line. *The houses hardly present a window towards the entrance,*

and each is enclosed in a small court and is defensible. Close to the village, on the only side at all accessible except by climbing, the remains of a tower at some distance above the path. Here, in the sixteenth century, lived Sampiero, a patriot shepherd and knight phatically called Il Corso. After his death his castle was destroyed by the Genoese, who left only this ruined tower. The Genoese lost possession of Corsica, but never without a struggle, and indeed never succeeded in entirely subduing the people. The memory of Sampiero Il Corso is dear to every Corsican; for the Corsican, like all islanders, is eminently patriotic, and has little inclination to mix his country and his nationality into any other. However that may be, the Genoese at any rate are thoroughly hated; and not without reason, for they have left no works of any kind beneficial to the country; while, on the other hand, they prevented the development of its resources, and seriously checked the civilisation of the island and the people. Established strongly on the coast, they lorded it over the conquered inhabitants, who were driven to the most inaccessible mountains, and forced to construct their wretched villages in places where none but wild animals and persecuted men would have selected. It may be said to have inaugurated the system of brigandage in the island, and they certainly helped to destroy the health of the plains. It was in fighting against this people that Sampiero became a hero. From this castle, which was almost unassailable, his headquarters were held the councils of war, and here he studied his plans. He is recorded that on the field he never undressed day or night; but in intervals of actual fighting he resorted to this favourite resort to take repose, and in this sanctuary of the independence of his island he passed all his leisure. He was at length treacherously murdered by one of his countrymen, called Vito; and it is known to all that he was a murderer, a second Judas, received for his treachery the sum of crowns from the government of Genoa. No wonder that the Genoese are hated. No wonder that the worst name for a traitor, in the language of the Corsican, is that of their disgraced countryman.

But Sampiero, though dead, is not forgotten. A halo of glory surrounds his grave; and nature herself is made to bear witness to the foulness of the deed and the patriotism of the hero. In a hollow below the castle a light hovers over the ground, and the o'-the-wisp reminds the simple inhabitants of the village of the deed that once took place here. The light is seen between midnight and dawn, generally in the autumn months, but occasionally at other times. It is christened *l'escarboucle*, the carbuncle; and is supposed to point to a treasure of great value existing below in the depths of the earth. To others it represents the soul of the island hero still hovering over the place where he loved to linger in his lifetime. Like all similar phenomena, it cannot be seen when approached too closely. Many a time trials have been made to discover the spot by

stationed on the hill opposite, guiding their companions by their voices. But the vaporous phosphoric light is not to be touched by mortal hands; the carbuncle is not to be unearthed.

Not far from the Castle of Sampiero is another spot interesting in Corsican history. It is called "Le Champ de Bataille," and though the battle to which it owes its name took place almost eleven centuries ago, the unwritten details are still fresh in the minds of the people, having been handed down from generation to generation with apparent fidelity in all essential points. Towards the end of the eighth century, the legend states that the island was in the hands of the Saracens, but there still existed in the mountains, and especially at Castifao, a nucleus of the faithful who were prepared to welcome any visitors who bore the Cross on their standard instead of the Crescent. With the benediction of Pope Adrian I. and the good wishes of the Emperor Charlemagne, at that time in Italy, the Roman nobles, who were still a powerful body, determined to attack the infidels in Corsica, the island being then regarded as one of the strongholds of the Moors. They collected an army of 22,000 men, including 5000 cavalry, landed on the western coast, marched as far as Corte without serious interruption, and thence pursued the Saracens up the valley to an open space below Castifao. Here, however, the enemy made a stand and intrenched themselves in a very strong position, having thickly-wooded hills behind and a river in front protecting their two wings. Far too clever to be drawn from this position, they sustained here the attacks of the Romans, and after a battle lasting from morning till night, it was found impossible to dislodge them. The Romans the next morning commenced a retreat towards Corte, whither they were followed by the Saracens, disputing however every inch of the way. The Christians of Castifao, finding the state of the case, armed themselves and attacked the Moslems in the rear. The result of this was to enable the Romans once more to take the offensive and insure the utter defeat and destruction of the Saracen army. A general rising of the Corsicans then took place, and the Saracens were reduced to submission. They never afterwards recovered their position in the island:

"I Romani li vinsero, e comanderanno loro."

Such is the account handed down by the Corsican peasants of this part of their history. The main facts are unquestionable, and the details highly probable. The site of the battle is quite unchanged, only the thick wood then on the hills has been removed. It would not be easy to find a better point for standing at bay in a battle conducted on mediæval principles.

Near the "Champ de Bataille" are some copper-mines recently opened and very promising, and perhaps in the course of a few generations, when a new industry has been introduced and sources of wealth are opened, the legends of Castifao may fade away, or rather the light

THE NIGHT IN CORSICA

... will be exchanged for the miner's
... of the earth treasures far more real
... of the East.

... west coast occupies the greater part of
... to one of the richest parts of
... it includes a considerable space of
... with vast forests of olive, and
... other fruit trees growing freely.
... thick-skinned orange, known in
... and state or otherwise pre-
... Corsica. There is no
... thickly covered with fine
... fruit-bearing trees
... and is surrounded

... west coast, charmingly
... with an island of
... consists of a few score
... There is a harbour
... the little
... of similar
... and several
... the traveller who is
... in the principal
... The true Corsican
... genius, but
... opportunity
... He was certainly
... success which

... runs along
... The situation is
... the mountains
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... on both
... The view of the
... only
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late groups and spurs of the principal mountains generally, shutting out all view of the loftiest summits. Between and amongst the mountains are numerous valleys at various levels more or less accessible, and the slopes enclosing these valleys are clothed for the most part with a thick growth of valuable forest-trees.

The forests of Corsica have been objects of mixed astonishment and delight to all lovers of nature from time immemorial. In 1839 they were estimated to cover a quarter of a million of acres. They are spoken of by Theophrastus, Polybius, Diodorus Siculus, and others among the ancients. In modern times some recent tourists, and especially Gregorovius, the best of all, has described them. They were till within the last half century flourishing and in good state, but very lately they have suffered in various ways, and this source of wealth has somewhat diminished. The most remarkable forests are in the higher valleys, and are not very accessible. The trees are pines and firs of various kinds, chestnut, oak, and beech. The enormous magnitude of the trees both in girth and height is perhaps more extraordinary than anything else concerning them, for it is said that single trees have been cut containing upwards of 2,000 cubic feet of timber. The pine called *Laricio* is one of the most valuable, and is almost peculiar to the island. It grows to a height of 100 feet, and supplies not only masts, but excellent material for all kinds of naval constructions and buildings. Seasoned under water it becomes elastic. The *Pinus pinea*, which yields edible fruit, is preferred for all carpenter's work. This tree grows with extraordinary rapidity, and in the very town of Bastia I measured one planted twenty-eight years ago and already more than eight feet in girth for the first fifteen or sixteen feet from the ground. Enormous quantities of charcoal as well as much timber are now got from the forests, as the improved state of the high roads and the construction of many new roads enable the produce to be removed to the coast; but there is still much to be done to develop this great source of wealth. The charcoal is used at an iron-foundry at Bastia, to reduce the iron ores of Elba brought there for the purpose, and the result has been very favourable, though hitherto the work has not been carried on with much system or energy.

Close to the town of Bastia, towards the north, and on a road recently constructed along the coast, there is a curious natural stalactitic cavern, small, but crowded with stalactites of unusually perfect form and beauty. Strangers are generally taken to see this cavern, and much ingenuity has been displayed by the owner of the estate of which it forms a striking ornament. The entrance to the cavern is about 200 feet above the sea, on a precipitous escarpment, the ascent to it being by steps cut in the rock. The cliff is of hard limestone, which forms a very beautiful building material. At the foot of the cliff a spring of beautifully bright water breaks out from a fracture in the strata, and the cavern itself is a part of this fracture. But

within the cavern there is now not even the smallest appearance of damp. Outside are numerous fragments worked into shape, and used in various constructions, forming a fantastic preparation for the wonders to be seen in the interior. It is perhaps hardly possible to imagine a more convenient, pleasant, or instructive cavern of its kind. It contains every variety of form assumed by limestone deposited from the dropping of water; but not a drop of water is visible. Well illuminated by a multitude of small lamps fed with olive-oil, it has not suffered at all by smoke, nor has it been destroyed by the hammers of visitors, who are not so numerous as to be unmanageable. It runs in for about seventy yards, and is divided into several chambers, at different levels, but all continuous, and separated only by sheets of stalactite more or less transparent. There is one chamber sixty feet long and about twenty feet wide, whose height varies from six to fifteen feet, and in it are displayed many curious varieties of form, with a few of those natural candelabra, suspended chandeliers, seats, columns, thin sheets with folds of the most exquisite delicacy and perfectly translucent. No one certainly should visit Bastia without paying a visit to the Cavern of Brando.

Among the less agreeable peculiarities of Bastia must be mentioned its liability to terrible winds. Twice during my short stay I was prevented from making excursions; once I dared not leave the house owing to the hurricanes. With a clear sky overhead, the wind rushes down from the mountains with such violence that it becomes impossible to stand against it. The day after one of these winds I walked up the narrow streets of the old town, which were then covered with fragments of fallen slates so thickly that it was impossible not to tread upon them. Large stones also, which it is usual to place on the roof to keep down the slates, were blown over into the streets, to the certain destruction of any unlucky pedestrian. But while this wind was blowing with such violence that no boat could live in the sea, I observed with a telescope, at the distance of a very few miles at sea, the vessels were sailing with every stitch of canvas set, taking advantage of a gentle breeze coming from a direction exactly at right-angles to that of the wind blowing on the shore.

The visitor to Bastia will find abundance of pleasant excursion within a short distance of the town. He may visit the interesting marble-quarries in the valley of the Bevinco, where he will see some of the finest serpentine marbles known—equal, indeed, to the best specimens of *verde antico*. He may take a trip by the diligence to Corti, the ancient capital of the island, and in so doing he will see the great lagoon of Biguglia, and follow the course of the picturesque Golo, one of the chief rivers of Corsica. Or he may make a pilgrimage along the silent and deserted coast, looking at the remains of Mariana at Aleria—the former a mediæval church, the latter of Roman or perhaps even of Etruscan origin. Nothing can be conceived more desolate

nothing can indicate more clearly the vast change that has taken on this coast.

may chance, perhaps, that some at least of the many Italian travellers in search of novelty, wishing to wander a little away from their haunts, may find these hints useful, and may give to poor Corsica a little of the attention generally devoted to better-known islands. The intelligent visitor thus diverging will not be disappointed. He will, at any rate, be sure of a friendly people, the absence of many conventionalities, and a certain amount of novelty. He will find a country possessed of almost every natural advantage, but with the drawback that, if not amended and corrected by human ingenuity, will render altogether valueless to man all these advantages. Where he ought to be the highest prosperity, he will find the deepest poverty; where there should be numerous well-peopled towns, he will find a desert. Whatever his tastes and tendencies may be, he will find abundant opportunity for observation and study, and will leave the island a wiser man than he entered it.

T. ANSTED, F.R.S.

NETTING

ALICE, my own one, even yet
That evening I can well remember,
When round the fire we three were met—
That evening in the dark December—
We three—your aunt, yourself, and I.
I lingered still, though late 'twas getting ;—
Must I be gone ? Well, by and by ;—
And you, my Alice, you were netting.

Your aunt—duenna kind—sat there,
With head o'er book discreetly bended ;
To writer's words could reader ne'er
So *very* closely have attended.
And you and I seemed all alone,
Her very presence then forgetting ;
A thousand themes I chatted on,
While, Alice darling, you were netting.

I think I asked you what poor prey,
What bird while bent upon an airing,
Would be a pris'ner some fine day,
In that same net you were preparing.
And then you blushed ; I smiled, and though
On the event I might have betted,
I started, for I thought—and lo !
I found—'twas I who thus was netted.

I yielded to my destined fate :
Your loving heart, your tender graces,
Your sunny smiles—these were the bait—
The sweetest face of all sweet faces !
Well, Alice, well ; though years have gone
Since then, those hours I've ne'er regretted,
Nor thought, save thankfully, upon
The way in which I then was netted.





BRIC-A-BRAC HUNTING

BY MAJOR H. BYNG HALL

QUEST THE THIRD

THE BAZAARS OF STAMBOUL

WHEN bidding adieu to the Eastern capital, I by no means recommend a visit to the bazaar, if merely in pursuit of ceramic treasures. I have, it is true, from time to time picked up a piece of Worcester, Wedgwood, and Dresden, at moderate prices ; no doubt brought to Constantinople in other days by an ambassador, consul-general, or some English merchant ; but little now remains, and for such as there is to be found the price asked is double that for which the same objects may be purchased in London. The fashion for collecting bric-à-brac without practice or knowledge has caused this. No sooner does an Englishman present himself in the bazaars than he is pounced upon by a host of greedy, unsavoury-smelling interpreters, who vie with one another in the endeavour to pillage him, and who generally succeed. Now, the readers of these pages must permit me to introduce them to Mr. Zenope, of the Grand Bazaar, a most respectable Armenian. If you visit Stamboul, porcelain-loving reader, go direct to him, place yourself unreservedly in his hands, decline all Jewish assistance, and I, after many years' experience, will answer for his honesty and probity.

Meanwhile permit me to remark that scarcely any physical undertaking is more fatiguing than that of passing a day of research in the bazaars of Stamboul, particularly if you are not so fortunate as to find right that is satisfactory.

The mode and manner of Oriental dealing is wide apart from that which may be simply termed European buying and selling. In London, Paris, or Vienna, you enter a bric-à-brac shop ; its contents are, generally speaking, clear to the eye ; you select that which appears to be desirable, ask the price, make your offer, purchase or refuse, and go your way. I must confess I should scarcely have the courage to act in London as I should unquestionably be disposed to do either at Paris or Vienna, or indeed any other Continental capital or town, namely, offer out half or a third the price asked. But all such delicate ideas may be banished in the bazaars at Constantinople, with the assurance that you will obtain nothing, great or small, on which some profit has not been secured to the sellers.

Having paid your respects to Zenope, accepted a cup of Turkish
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coffee or a glass of lemonade, according to season and inclination, smoked a cheroot or cigarette—if given to cigarettes, to which all the Frank inhabitants incline—proceed to that portion of the bazaars entitled the Arms Bazaar. It is dark, gloomy, not to say dirty, to the eye, and unsavoury to the nose, but curious and picturesque in the extreme.

You approach the shop, if it may so be called, of a bric-à-brac merchant. He is possibly engaged with some other customer, or smoking his pipe, or munching a cucumber, or counting his beads, and takes no more notice of you than if you were one of the dogs that lie sleeping in the streets of Stamboul. Patience is said to be a virtue—prove that you possess it if you can, and bring all your good-temper to aid you. Being in a hurry will not assist you in the slightest degree. If the dealer's tongue be unknown to you, appeal calmly for the aid of your interpreter, and arouse the old gentleman from his lethargy as you would stir up a sleepy animal in Wombwell's menagerie.

You see, or fancy you see, high on the shelf above him, a choice piece of china, or any other article of bric-à-brac, which might possibly suit you; and as it is in all probability covered with dust, and beyond your reach, you civilly request to be permitted to handle it prior to the investment of your money. In answer to your request, the merchant casts his expressive eyes towards the roof of the bazaar, and gives a kind of cluck with his throat, which means that the object is either broken or already sold, or that in his opinion it will not please you. The fact of the matter is, the weather is hot, and moving is unpleasant. Being, however, desirous to judge for yourself, you again politely rouse his excellency, who at length uncrosses his legs, raises himself from his sitting position, and does you the favour to allow you to examine the goods he is there to sell, with the air of a man who is doing you an honour. We will say that you take a fancy to some object amongst his wares. Then comes the bargaining. Alas, this is a diplomatic process almost beyond European endurance. "Ask him the price," you say to your interpreter. The free-and-easy merchant chumps his cucumber or smokes his pipe, as he calmly replies, "Two hundred piastres." "Two hundred piastres! Why, I could buy it in Vienna for fifty!" you exclaim. "No doubt, sir," says the disinterested interpreter; "but you are in Stamboul, not in Vienna." And so you move on, and, nine times out of ten, are called back, and possibly end by making the purchase for about a quarter the price first named. And so is it throughout the bazaars.

Turks are neither an energetic nor an inventive people; neither are they gifted with taste for, or love of, the fine arts. I should scarcely imagine that a hundred subjects of the Light of the World could distinguish a Murillo from a signboard, or a Sèvres vase from a flower-pot. Nevertheless there was a porcelain manufactory formerly on the banks of the Bosphorus, the property, I fancy, of foreigners. I do not

suppose, however, that it succeeded in achieving anything beyond a teapot or washhand-basin. And yet I know of no country on which the sun shines that possesses such abundance of admirable material for the manufacturing of pottery and porcelain. Had poor Palissy lived in the East, what marvels of art he would have produced! But the art of Turkey scarcely soars above a gilded pipe-bowl.

MADRID.

"Quen dice Espagna dice toto."

"*No hay sino un Madrid*" (There is but one Madrid). There is but one stage from Madrid to Paradise, in which there is a window for angels to look down on the counterpart of heaven on earth. So say all Spaniards. Have you ever been there? No. Well, the month is late spring, the sky blue, the sea calm and purple; so let us start—say from Marseilles; cross the oft-times troubled waters of the Gulf of Lyons, now like a mirror; touch at Barcelona, where I never yet saw or cracked a nut; halt at Alicante; and travel south by railway through La Manca, mentally in company with Don Quixote and Sancho, to the capital of her most Catholic Majesty. Though it is at times the hottest, and at others the coldest climate in southern Europe—indeed, it is proverbially asserted that "*el aire de Madrid es tan solil, que mata a un hombre, y no apaya a un candil*," which being translated simply means that the subtle air which will not extinguish a candle puts out a man's life—it is nevertheless by no means an indifferent abiding-place for a time for the bric-à-brac hunter, or anyone else.

After having passed, we will say, a week in the Museo, with which time, if you are a lover of high art, you will still scarcely be satisfied, so exceedingly rich is the place in treasures—a palace in fact of thought and beauty, filled with spirits of past days, where the dead reappear as in visions of delight;—as a refreshment for your taxed energies, seek the walks of the Retiro gardens, near which was the celebrated "*La China*," or royal porcelain manufactory, founded by Charles III. in 1759, who brought workmen from his similar factory at Capo di Monte, Naples. Everything was destroyed by the French, and the place converted into a fortification, which surrendered with 200 cannon, on the 14th August 1812, to the Iron Duke. It was subsequently blown up by Lord Hill, when the misconduct, or perfidy, or whatever you like to call it, of Ballesteros compelled him to evacuate Madrid. Since which time, to the day in which we live and hunt for specimens of Buena Retiro, one of the standing calumnies against us—so often repeated, and still credited by young Spain, although more than half a century has elapsed—is that all the finest specimens were destroyed by the English from mere jealousy. Whereas the real truth is that the fathers, or grandfathers, of our gallant allies of to-day scarcely recollect what they did yesterday—they broke the Ollas themselves,

and converted the manufactory into a Bastille, which, and not the pipkins, we did destroy. So little did we dread Spanish competition, that we have actually introduced their system, and very fair china is now produced at Madrid, made for the most part by English workmen.

Ferdinand VII., on his restoration, recreated "La China," removing the workshops and warerooms to La Mondoa; but this has also ceased to exist—at least as regards high art.

On my first visit to Madrid—or La Corte, as it is generally termed by Spainards, as if there were no other court in Europe save that of the Spanish Paradise or La Gloria—I own my heart beat with fond anticipation of the numberless specimens of Bueno Retiro china I should carry homewards. But, alas, such was my ignorance of this extremely rare and beautiful porcelain, that all my researches were more or less in vain. I obtained little or nothing worthy to be purchased; and with the exception of a few very moderate and imperfect specimens, I have never been enabled to secure anything of great beauty. In fact, the only group of real value that I cast my eyes on at Madrid was a centre-piece on the English minister's table, which, when hungry, one hardly thanked him for exhibiting; for while, on the one hand, it created envy and jealousy, on the other, the impossibility of keeping one's longing eyes from it prevented due attention to his gastronomic hospitality.

In other days there were three very indifferent bric-à-brac shops at Madrid. One was more or less a private collection, though everything was for sale that was gathered together by Don Hosez, landlord of the Hôtel d'Angleterre, the only decent hotel both as regards charges and comfort I ever recollect at Madrid. Don Hosez's establishment was opposite the British Legation, in the ancient palace or judgment-hall of the Inquisition. But both Don Hosez and his hotel have ceased to exist, and happily the Inquisition also. The house has become the residence of the French ambassador, and Don Hosez's collection has since been scattered far and wide. From him I chanced to get a few pieces of Spanish pottery and porcelain of little value. One of the other shops appears also to have vanished; and on my last visit to La Corte, I only discovered the third in the Calle Alcaza, where little is to be obtained, save an occasional sword, and various heavy and by no means choice specimens of mediæval furniture.

Some years ago, when strolling leisurely one intensely hot evening in August along the Calle Alcaza, the very best if not the principal street of Madrid, I chanced to see some curious cups in the window of the shop in question. After examining them, and asking their value, suggested to the owner that, as it was late and my dinner awaited me, if he would send them to my hotel on the following morning I would make him an offer. To this he agreed, and expressed desire to show me a handsome china *déjeuner* then in his possession. "It is late and getting dark," said I; nevertheless I could not resi

peep; and so, after traversing several dark passages, we entered a room filled with ancient dusty furniture, when a cupboard being unlocked, he produced therefrom a large brass-bound box, which contained, as he had said, a *déjeuner* of the most lovely modern Sèvres it has ever been my good fortune to behold. Having taken one of the pieces in my hand and examined the mark, I carelessly asked the price, which being named I found far beyond my means and intentions. Nevertheless the owner appeared extremely anxious to part with it; and as I bade him good-evening, he urged me to come again by daylight. "Well," I replied, "it is very beautiful, though quite modern; moreover, if it were not so, your price is at least two-thirds beyond what I should be disposed to give." "Maybe; but the signor will at all events call to-morrow?" "Possibly," said I. And so we parted, not, however, without a lingering desire on my part to possess the *déjeuner*, however small the hope. I felt besides an intense curiosity as to how he had obtained it; for it was far too costly to have come, as I supposed, honestly into the hands of him who claimed it.

On the following morning a Signorina, somewhat fat and certainly over forty, accompanied by a lad, called on me with the few specimens I had selected, which, after a little bargaining, became my property; and she then urged on me to take another look at the Sèvres, which I agreed to do, appointing three o'clock as the time of my visit. On my arrival, having passed along the same dark passages, which were divided by doors, the china was again placed before me, and there being a much brighter light, it appeared still more beautiful than on the previous evening. In the room at the time there were two women and the lad who had brought my china in the morning. Having again questioned her as to the price, &c., I told the good woman, who appeared to take the lead, that I did not want the china (which was an innocent fib), that it was far beyond my means; but, said I, in an off-hand manner, "as you appear most anxious to part with it, I will tell you what I will do—I will give you forty sovereigns, or fifty napoleons in gold;" gold being then somewhat scarce at Madrid. Now my offer was received with great good-humour, but neither accepted nor refused—in fact, made half in joke, half in earnest, more than 200*l.* having been demanded. I then began to look at some old swords which lay dusty in a corner of the apartment; when all of a sudden the door flew open, and in rushed two of the most disagreeable-looking vagabonds I ever beheld. Drawing, as if by impulse, the sword I held in my hand from the scabbard, the Spanish proverb occurred to me, "*No me saques sin razon; no me envaines sino honor*;" which simply means, Do not draw me without cause, or sheath me without honour; and dropping the point, I stood with my back to the corner from whence I had taken it, awaiting the next move—not, however, very calmly, for the day was intensely hot, and it occurred to me that I had got into a den of thieves. Moreover, an angry Spaniard is not always particular whether

he sticks you in the back or the front. But what did it all mean? Two men appeared to be terribly excited, and the angry discussion *patois* which took place was far beyond my comprehension, though and the box of china were evidently the subjects of discussion. My position, I must admit, was not the pleasantest in life. At last, a temporary pause taking place, I demanded the cause of this inconceivable outbreak. "We were behind the door," said one man, "and we hear you offer fifty sovereigns for the china." "You are in error," said "I offered fifty napoleons. Nevertheless, if you will bring it to my hotel, I will give you fifty sovereigns,"—glad to escape by any means from my disagreeable position; "I do not carry so much gold in my pocket."

On this another boisterous conversation took place, the box and its contents being eventually hoisted on one man's shoulders; and he hailed the fact as the advent of my release and possession of the china. But, alas, nothing of the kind. I was detained another half-hour—prisoner, in fact. Happily my release came at last in the person of a well-dressed gentleman, who had doubtless been sent for, and who evidently had a perfect knowledge of my gaolers, and also of the china I was desirous to purchase. Having at length gained the street, he addressed my companion, courteously demanding whom I had the honour to thank for my release, what was his connection with the parties by whom I had been insulted—in fact, I requested to be enlightened as to the whole affair.

Thus spoke the mighty hidalgo, having first informed me he was a Spanish nobleman:

"You ought not to trust yourself in such places."

"Trust myself in such places!" I replied; "a bric-à-brac shop is the principal street and thoroughfare of Madrid?"

"You are not in England, signor," he replied.

"There is no question as to that," I said; "meanwhile I thank you for coming to my aid, whether intentionally or by chance. I am ignorant of your knowledge of these people, and equally so of your connection in reference to the china they so eagerly desire to sell. In case you have any interest in the matter, you will place me under no further obligations by telling them most distinctly, that if they bring the china in question to my hotel by twelve o'clock to-morrow, I will give them 40*l.*; if the clock strikes the quarter-past, and no one appears, I shall instantly lay the whole matter before the English minister, demanding compensation for being forcibly detained, and the punishment of its authors." And taking off my hat, I wished him an excellent good-morning.

As the hour of twelve sounded throughout the city on the following day, the box and its contents, in perfect preservation, was placed in my room. I paid a thousand francs, and on the same night formed a portion of my belongings *en route* to Paris. With a cup

my pocket I visited Sèvres, where I ascertained that this beautiful specimen of modern Sèvres had been sent by the King Louis Philippe as a present to her most Catholic Majesty of Spain on her marriage. Of course I have here only given an outline of the facts as they occurred; and having no desire to injure or question the honesty of others, I will endeavour to forget all the curious details of the affair since come to my knowledge, save that if I became the possessor of a beautiful Sèvres *déjeuner*, I did so by fair means and payment, and at considerable personal discomfort.

There is now very little to be done by the bric-à-brac hunter in Madrid; and yet there surely must be some magnificent specimens of Bueno Retiro and other specimens of Spanish china scattered about the principal towns and cities of Spain in private houses, though it has never yet been my good fortune to meet with any. Of historical swords, the finest collection in the world may be seen in the Armoria at Madrid, many of them having mottoes similar to the one I have quoted in a previous page, indicative of the fine old cavalier spirit which once existed in Spain, and which I am not prepared to say does not still exist.

DIANA GAY

J. Nobel

BY THE AUTHOR OF "BELLA DONNA," "NEVER FORGOTTEN," ETC. ETC.

Book the First.

CHAPTER V. GAY COURT.

ON the Calthorpe-road there was a handsome red-brick archway, well covered with ivy, with a good sweep in front, and a semicircular wall, with pillars and chains. To the traveller passing by, and thinking of his dull inn and coffee-room at Calthorpe, the next town, the glimpse through the great gate of the fair open meadows, the noble trees scattered about, and the patch of the mansion itself afar off, nestling in a warm clump, and, like a Spanish beauty, lifting the corner of her veil to show a little of her face, such glimpse gives the best sensation of luxury and enjoyable pleasure—beyond even the solemn grandeurs of a palace. Everyone passing Gay Court had this thought in his mind: "What a fine place it was!" and the flyman always said, "It well might be, for there was lots o' money to back it; and all this here a both sides of the road, as far as yer could sec, was his'n." And, further, that it all went, "every shilling on it, to young Miss Dinah" at the old man's death. Is it one of the mysterious hints repeated over the world in many shapes, that man should look to a future state, that the vulgar should have this profound interest in the reversioner rather than in the person in possession?

On the two piers of the gateway rose two large carved larks, with the inscription underneath, "TOUJOURS GAI," the family motto. Any one asking at the gate was allowed, almost invited, to go up and see the place. Indeed it was open in the summer for two days in the week to picnic parties; and Mr. Gay had built a little pavilion close to the lake for their special use and advantage, where they dined, and could afterwards have their dance.

It was not an old place, or indeed a "place" proper. Mr. Gay had found it a good square-built brick house; and having met the well-known adapting architect Jenkinson, who knew what could be "made" of a house without pulling down, and whose devotion to a peculiar style had procured him the name of "Middle-aged Jenkinson," he had secured this gentleman's services; who had put out a gable or two, "run up" a campanile, and laid out a terrace. These small additions had "warmed up" the place a good deal, and did not interfere with the old of comfort. Mr. Gay, though a pure country squire, had nothing to

do with the old notion of the "country squire," but went with the times, and enjoyed everything of the present day. He was fond of travelling, spoke languages, read German a good deal, and enjoyed "life;" that is, even the ordinary blessings of living—a fine day, a pretty view, a good walk, the mere sense of drawing-in the fresh air vigorously—filling his broad chest, and saying, "I never have a day's sickness,"—blessings not known or considered until the *demi-jour* of old age has set in, and the night is drawing on fast. Some day we may learn the art of discounting the cheap pleasures of life, now thought of poorly because so universal.

Four miles off was Calthorpe, the usual country town, into which drove the ladies from the country seats round, to buy at M'Williams and Co.'s, General Drapery House, "*From London.*" (It was common to stand by M'Williams and Co. and say we got things as good from him as from a West-end shop.) At directly the opposite quarter, and about six miles off, was the great town, the metropolis of the district, Ironston, or Irnston as it was called, a huge manufacturing centre, which seemed to live, and thrive too, in a great yellow mist of its own; where, as we went flying through it for a mile or so on a line of heavy arches over its streets, we saw tiers of dull red houses, and great red monster buildings, with a gap open, as it were, where were seen flames, and from whence came the ring and ding-dong of metal; marked out too with chimneys, thick as posts, pouring out fumes of black smoke with vigour and earnestness. Looking down below into the street, we saw heavy wains with four and six horses, sauntering, as it were, along with an easy pull, and on every wain a great boiler, or a huge girder, all over rivets, as with metal buttons. Here was a grand town-hall, stately and huge, and even magnificent, but gaunt and stiff and inelegant, like the iron-workers themselves. Here a great organ thundered; here, when the festival came on, iron-throated, stiff-chested men gathered by the hundred and roared "Israel in Egypt," from throats like ophicleides. And here, in red-brick barracks at the edge of the town, were now quartered the 1st (Du Barry's) Hussars. Everyone drove into Calthorpe at half an hour's notice, but to drive into Ironston was made a more serious business. It was arranged the day before: there was due dressing, and a regular expedition planned.

There was a set of houses, all at pretty nearly the same distance from Calthorpe: Gay Court, as we have just seen; Bowman House, "the seat of Mr. and Lady Margaret Bowman;" and the Crowders, owners of a place called the Priory, which had belonged to a ruined squire, in whose family it had been since the old Priory days,—the Crowders were in the "iron" line, and some of the great boilers seen from the railway bridge lying helpless on the wagons were travelling from their great yards. There was Dr. Windle's, the rector's, house; Mrs. Bligh's neat road-side villa; and Burton, Mr. Lugard's, M.P., a gentlemanly place, quiet, well cut, and well kept—like his own clothes. These families

were grouped together. How they "saw each other," how wealth prevailed in the case of Gay Court, political position at Burton, and how often we could meet the livery servant going up the avenue at Bowman House with the note, in which the "Honour of Mr. and Lady Margaret Bowman's company at dinner" was entreated, we may well imagine. Such a bit of quality will keep a whole district sweet and wholesome, and goes from house to house like the old Irish sacred bell, which was sent for all through the parish and sworn upon, for a small fee, in the case of conflicting testimony. Such is the homage rank must pay to society, and every family in the kingdom hath a right to have its jom, or splendidly gilt image, which it can bow before and—have to dinner.

Thus much for a little disposition of the characters, and the clearing of the ground, as it were. School-boy days are over; and some years have passed since Doctor Wheeler had his exhibition-day at Prospect House. The lodge-gates of Gay Court are wide open this fine February morning, and the fourth carriage of a series has swept in with that centrifugal turn which is so agreeable to a driver, and which, perhaps, is not unwelcome to the horses. The soft rumbling up the smooth avenue comes gratefully after the rough road; and they pull up with a clatter and scattering of gravel under the light glass-and-iron porch which Middle-aged Jenkinson has thrown out from the door. Mr. Lugard was the last to arrive on this occasion, riding over from Burton on a fine horse, with a smart, correct, and gentlemanly groom behind.

There must be some little festival at the Court that morning. For the men were standing about and waiting, with many a speech of approbation—"Well, and he deserves it, sure enough. Where'd there be a fox only for him?" This was the view of a certain interest. "And a large-minded, liberal-arted man,—none of your sixpenny gents as will take a hard-working man's suvvises gratuitous!"—which stood for popularity in the dining-room. We go up with Mr. Lugard, who is dressed as though he were going to a London flower-show, in an elegant frock-coat, pale trousers, and a scarlet geranium in his button-hole. As he followed the servant up very fast, for he was a little late, he settled his hair, put on a delicate-tinted glove, and looked surprisingly young indeed.

The large drawing-room was quite full. There was a buzz of voices; but above them all was heard the hearty laugh of Mr. Gay. There were ladies and gentlemen present; and beside her father, her hand on his arm, looking up into his face and laughing as he laughed, was Miss Diana Gay, now grown taller, but a little "filled out," as one of the squires would say, and in face more refined and brilliant than ever. She was all excited. The prettily-shaped mouth was yet more marked; the skin paler and firmer. And there were the little side *accroche-cœurs*, and the trinkets in which she delighted clinking about her neck and wrists. She had on a white "Garibaldi," with a

tiny frill that stood up about her neck. Every moment that she turned her face to look at someone or to listen, a bright flush seemed to pass across it. She gave a start and a clap of her hands as she saw Mr. Lugard enter.

"Here he is at last!" she said.

Leaning solemnly against the wall was a large flat object covered up in baize. The squires were looking at it with a sort of veneration. It seemed like a picture.

Mr. Lugard, conferring with two or three gentlemen and taking some papers from them, said, "I think so—quite right." And then, smoothing his hair and stretching his arm so as to have his shirt-sleeve comfortable, he advanced in the middle, and everybody fell away for him. He began, in a clear voice, "Mr. Gay,—Sir, I have been deputed by a number of gentlemen and—what is far more important—ladies of this district—ladies and gentlemen who have known you long, sir, and esteem you more the longer they know you—to present to Miss Diana Gay, the charming young lady beside you, whom we all admire, a portrait of her father in—er—hunting costume. We all know what this district was before, sir, *you* took up the hounds, and we know what it is *now*."

And repeated "Hear, hears," low and growling, like dogs, indorsed this sentiment.

Mr. Lugard went on to dwell on Mr. Gay's virtues, the charm of his manner (it had been agreed among the donors that no one could do a thing of this sort so happily as Lugard), and, he might add, his hospitality and friendliness. And there was a certain appropriateness, he said, in making such a present to Miss Diana Gay. The Calthorpe Hunt knew pretty well where her place was, whether at the death or at the find. And, in conclusion, Mr. Lugard, going over to the picture, drew the green baize aside, and presented it formally to Diana.

She looked down; looked up at her father; then, with great embarrassment, felt her earring. In a low voice she said, "I *do* thank you all very much for this beautiful picture of my dear father, which I shall promise to like nearly as much as I do himself. And I can answer for him he will always keep up the old Calthorpe Hunt as well as he does now. Thank you, indeed."

This little speech was greeted with immense applause. Then everyone crowded round to look at what they had given. There, in a rich broad gold frame, stood John Gay, Esq., of Gay Court, as his name would be read in the next Academy Exhibition, to which it would be sent. There he stood, in a hot scarlet coat and very yellow buckskins, with his heavy whip held across his thighs; there he stood, looking fixedly and stonily out—certainly as John Gay of Gay Court, a man most mercurial and changeable of face and motion, never looked. There were three of his *black-and-white* hounds—painted in very "*hard*," with their tails like so many stiff notes of admiration—claus-

tered about his boots. In the distance, a faint little glimpse of Gay Court.

Saltmarshe had received five hundred guineas. A "clever fellow"—a kind of "hunting" artist, who was a half-gentleman and asked to country houses. He kept a sort of "screw" himself, rode to hounds, as, he said, "to pick up bits of character, you know;" which he did, in a certain sense, as he contrived to pick up an order now and then to paint a hunter or a hunter's horse.

Hunting-men would have but a poor opinion of your artist fellow; but when he had done "Nero" and "Peppercorn," and a few more equine portraits, "you'd see the very hairs in his mane," the delighted admirers would cry.

"My god!" cries another, with his glass close to the picture; "and the very letters on the button! Never saw anything like it. And the coat!"

Saltmarshe, the "hunting" artist, would have been delighted had he heard all these compliments. And yet, after all, these hunting-pictures are a little awful, and but a gaunt nightmare-shape of memorial.

Mr. Gay then said a few hearty words. He thanked them from his heart; he did indeed. His face and figure, he was afraid, was not worth all that fine colour. But they would have it, and his daughter there was content. And he would say he believed it was the most acceptable present she ever got. (And Miss Diana's eyes, fixed on his face, began to glisten, and her classic mouth spread into a smile of delighted affection.) As for what he had done for their hunting, it was all purely selfish. It was a fine manly English sport; and he should be ashamed to be a fellow—and he believed there were such—who wouldn't encourage it. (Everyone knew that this allusion pointed to an odious Mr. M'Gregor, against whom insinuations went about of foul and dark crimes in relation to foxes.) The man that would harm a fox, Mr. Gay went on warmly, he would be on his guard against. He would not trust him; and he would end badly. Some poet said something about no one's laying his hand on a woman save in the way of kindness. And so he said about the foxes, who should always, as long as he drew breath, have a home and hospitality at Gay Court, and not be disturbed save by fair, honourable, open, manly hunting.

This speech was received with tremendous approbation. And presently all were invited downstairs to what, to the local reporter, poor soul, was "a sumptuous repast," but which was indeed only the common shape of entertainment at Gay Court when guests were present.

Lady Margaret, large and rustling, and her satin mantle and laces gathered about her, "beat down" the stairs with Mr. Gay. She was, of course, the woman of honour; and at every dinner in the district, at the solemn moment of announcement, the host had to present a crooked arm to her ladyship, who, as of course, rustled away and led *the procession*.

CHAPTER VI.

"D'ORSAY."

DOWN in the large dining-room she looked round. "Where's that dear girl? She must really come next me, I have so much to say to her. Pretty bright thing she is, she is so happy to-day!"

"Ah, so she does!" said the delighted papa.—"Ducky, won't you come here next Lady Margaret?"

Miss Diana was in charge of Mr. Lugard, the important person of the day, and was sitting down at the other end of the table when she heard her father's voice. "Yes, yes, Widge"—a name she had for him—"I'm coming.—Now, Mr. Lugard, you must come; I couldn't stay for the world." And, much to that gentleman's annoyance, they had to change their places.

The table was very crowded. It was a long, large, spacious, sombre room, with a crimson-and-gold paper, and many family pictures hung round. There were a great many guests—all the hunt and the neighbours, except, indeed, the abhorred M'Gregor, against whom the unnatural crime was whispered about, and who was, of course, not fit company for gentlemen. There was a large red-faced gentleman, very stout, coarse in his voice, whom we have not seen before, which was Mr. Crowder, from the Priory, who was so wonderful in the "iron" way, and who had a vulgar wife and a large daughter, and who went about in the mornings in a broad-tailed dress-coat. But he was good in the field, rode on a great strong brown horse with enormous quarters and a white star on the forehead, who carried him over, and through, all. This redeemed the wife, broad-tailed coat, vulgarity—everything. He was an "arrant snob" until he was seen one day on the great horse. Mysterious hunting, that levels all distinctions, or rather that raises the lowest to the highest! The remarkable hunting-man, no matter what his degree, wins respect and homage; his words are wisdom; and, though but a chandler, his lordship is proud to have his opinion.

"Ah!" said Mr. Gay, looking down the table, "I don't see Mrs. Bligh; I want to talk to her. Di pet, can you find her out?"

Not every one had yet been seated. In a moment Miss Diana had flown away, and returned with the lady.

"Come here, Mrs. Bligh," said the host; "sit yourself down next me, on this great day for Gay Court. I declare I feel quite proud when I think of myself leaning against the wall upstairs in my gold frame."

The lady whom we know to be Robert Bligh's mother was a woman with a very remarkable face, with dark hair turning iron-gray, eyes not brilliant, but deep-set and burning with a slow and steady light. All her features were firm, well cut, and almost manly, yet were fine-

looking, and had been handsome. She was dressed quietly and even richly, but in a sort of half-mourning; at least with velvet set off with mauve. She spoke with a firm clear voice.

"So Robert is coming down to you," said Mr. Gay; "I am very glad of it. I told him long ago this overworking won't do; and a man gets nothing by it, for in the end he has to give in. It is like drawing bills: you get the money down, but have to take it up later with heavy interest, commission, and what not."

"I tell him so, too," said she; "but he is ambitious. I am afraid I am a little responsible, for I encouraged him at the moment; for a day's success in youth is worth a year's in after-life."

"You're right there, Mrs. Bligh; youth is the time. To hear a young fellow talking of poverty! Why, youth is money, beauty, health,—everything! Listen to that, Doatsey."

That young lady gave a laugh. "I should like to be always young; at least, not older than papa." Then she coloured, for she thought of Mrs. Bligh, who was smiling at her. "Or, I mean, Mrs. Bligh, too."

Mr. Gay threw himself back and laughed very loudly. "See how Di gets herself out of a scrape!"

Mrs. Bligh went on: "I knew all this, and what he could do with his great abilities, and am afraid I pressed him too much; but I did it all for the best. I want to see him a very great man."

The slow fires in her eyes brightened up as she spoke this. She spoke so fervently, Diana looked over at her with interest. The young girl had the greatest reverence for "mind" and talent.

"He is getting on wonderfully, Mrs. Bligh, is he not?" she asked. "Do you recollect the day at the school? We all thought him so stupid up to that. When Mr. Lu——"

Miss Diana's mouth took the shape of an O from a feeling of fright, having forgotten Mr. Lugard, his father, who was listening.

"I never meant it," said Diana earnestly, and even solemnly; "I am only joking."

"I know what you mean, Miss Diana; and it's not fair of you to your old friend Dick. It was a mere accident; he had got the spelling or Latin-grammar prize ever so often before.—Your son, Mrs. Bligh, who is a very sharp fellow, cleverly threw him off his guard, and I don't blame him.—All's fair, Miss Diana, in love, war, or examinations."

"Nothing of the kind," said Mrs. Bligh firmly. "Every year, as Dr. Wheeler told me, he worked up nearer and nearer, and that year he succeeded; he was the best man in the school."

"He'll make a figure, I know," said Mr. Gay. "I had Buller, the Q.C., to dinner when he came down on his circuit; and he says, for the time he has been at it, he is the most wonderful junior he knows. Mind, he comes over here as soon as he arrives. We shall all be glad to see him. Lord Bellman is coming, and bringing his horses; and my

little lady here wants to fill her house and have some fun.—And, Lugard,—I'll write to Dick; he is engaged already."

"O, Dick knows," said Mr. Lugard, with one of his sweet smiles. "He wouldn't miss it. Though, indeed, how he manages to dispose of all the invitations they shower on him! He has a wonderful tact for getting on. I never told you—did I?—how he got on General Bateman's staff."

"I suppose the general put him on it—ha, ha, ha!"

"Yes; but what made the general put him on it? Why, Dick himself, simply by having tact and being a gentleman. He was walking with Harrington through the town, and he saw a shabbily-dressed woman, with a cur-dog biting at her dress. She seemed frightened; and Harrington, whose father, by the way, is a leather man, laughed heartily, and was passing on when she appealed to him. But Dick recollected a bit of advice I gave him, always to be gentlemanly to every woman—it might be a rich old woman, who would leave him a fortune; no one could tell—and Dick went up, beat the dog away, took off his hat, and was greatly laughed at by the leather fellow. But who do you suppose this was? No other than Mrs. Bateman, the general's wife, come to look out for a house. And within a month Dick, who knows how to build for himself if you give him any sort of a foundation, was on the general's staff. I assure you," added Mr. Lugard, raising his voice, "a little of that tact and readiness is worth all the drudgery and learning in the world; because, you see, it does more in a minute than the other would do in years."

This view certainly did impress the company, and Diana looked round at Mr. Lugard with a little mysterious air of awe habitual to her when she heard anything *very* wise. Who does not admire an instance of the exquisite science of "getting on in the world," or rather the charm of "manner" which acts so magically and yet so cheaply—and the want of which is so fatal?

Mr. Lugard, who always talked in a sweet and luscious way, which gives quite a young air, told them more about his son.

"He's uncommonly extravagant though," he said. "For a mere lad as he is, it's outrageous." (He always impressed on his hearers this fact of "being a mere lad;" and certainly people meeting them in the street had taken them for elder and younger brothers.) "But I can't complain, for he has paid his way hitherto. He has a horse this moment, which we'll see him turn out on some morning, worth three hundred, and for which he paid forty. There again, you see, judgment is worth money."

Lady Margaret had been busy all this while with her lunch—for she had an admirable appetite, and liked her "glass of wine," as she said; a mere euphuism, which it would be discourteous to test by cross-examination—and had been very busy with soup, chicken, tongue, salad, and other good things. As has been said, she was inclined to

a full habit of person, which seemed clamorous for nourishment the first lull she turned to Diana and took possession of that lady, absorbing her with speech, lips, hands, and rustling she though she had been a tender bit of the breast of a chicken.

"And now tell me about yourself," said Lady Margaret in a confidential way that was her characteristic. "What day will you come over and stay? I heard your father talk of Lord Bellman know them, my dear child, as well as you do me. Met them at la-Chapelle, both of us at Dremel's—poor Bowman screaming his liver—and that nice youth that was with him. Poor Lady Be she used to walk with me and tell me her troubles; for he was best of—you know. I must tell your father to bring them to see us."

"O yes," said Diana, listening gravely to this stream of talk. "tell papa, and I am sure he will be delighted."

"You must come, my dear," went on Lady Margaret, affected to see her glass being filled again with champagne, and then she went on with horror; "and stay a long, long time. I want you to know Canning, who will be with us. He has promised to get some leave from his duties. He is getting on so. I could show you letters from Lord Cumberley at the Foreign Office. *Such* letters! They are nothing without him. Ah, my dear, I wish we had all such a boy as our Canning. I assure you," and Lady Margaret nodded her head significantly, "there's many a girl in town would be glad to see him."

Our Diana, as mentioned, was always impressed by the influence of great intellectual gifts, and listened with that little air of awe and mystery which became her so much.

"And he is so clever," she said. "They say so."

"I don't like repeating these things," said her ladyship, lightly round; "but I will show you letters when you come to Bowman that will astonish you. Lord Cumberley came in the other day to my office, and said, 'Who's doing this?' and they told him one of the ordinary people of the place. And he said at once, 'Send down Mr. Canning Bowman.' My dear, I wish we could all do as much as Canning. Only wait, and we shall see." And Miss Diana was impressed by the meaning of this rather trite remark, which,

phrases, would have been floating about. Then some went away, others went out to the garden, and a few amateurs were told by Mr. Gay that by and by, when he had "settled the ladies," he would show them the horses; and no connoisseurs relish the pictures, books, gardens, &c. with the zest with which the horse gentlemen do a visit to that "choice and rare gallery," the stable.

Mr. Gay, going up to the drawing-room, found the ladies there, looking at his picture again.

"There I am again," he said. "Between ourselves, I shall begin to hate myself. I look so stiff and fiery. Surely I never stood that way, simpering, with my leg bent, and those poor wooden dogs staring at me. If I *was* on the ground, I was always calling to someone, or patting their heads, or looking out over the hills. But I suppose Saltmarshe knows his trade best. Between ourselves, I think he ain't much on a horse's back, whatever he is off it; though he talks plenty about setting his beast at this jump and that jump.—Eh, ducksy," he added, putting his arm about Miss Diana, who had come up, "do you remember when you pulled up Saltmarshe? He said he'd been out with the Linkwater hounds the last week; and he and old Monboddie, and two other fellows, had stuck on to the end; and he was dead-beat, and all that. And what did you say to him, Di, in your own quiet sly way,—come?"

"I told him, pa," said Diana, laughing, but with her eyes on the ground, "that he must have been out hunting by himself; for the last hunt of the season was in *Bell's Life* a fortnight before. And he got so red, that I think he'd have chopped me in two. But," she said, becoming grave, "I must go and speak to the rector's wife and her daughters."

"There's a knowing young lady," said her father, looking after her with great pride. "She'll get on. I declare it was as good as a play, the way she plained the fellow. And I wasn't a bit sorry. You know he was by way of being fine and at the nobility's parties—Lady Jane and this, and 'Tumbletowers said to me'—that is, the Earl of Tumbletowers, you know. And I do believe he was trying the romantic with my little girl, coming down in his velvet jacket and a Raphael sort of look on. But she was up to him; and I must say it was rich to listen to her. The first time he came down in these togs, she was looking at him very steadily, and he was languishing, when she says gravely, 'I declare, Mr. Saltmarshe, you're so like Lady Margaret's fine postillion.' Very rude, and all that, but *uncommon* good, you know. But when he found her one day putting a pair of moustaches in my picture, it was going too far, and he threatened to leave the house. Between ourselves, I had to blow her up. O, he's a humbug; but the hunting-fellows here would have him. There's a very different style at the end of the room. You know this one, of course, Lady Margaret. That poor fellow George!"

This was a picture of a fair-haired young man, in old-fashioned regimentals, with a high choking collar.

"So it is; he was in the army. Yes."

And having supplied this information, which was indeed surplusage, she gazed steadily at it.

"I always feel as if I was in his shoes, where I had no right to be," said Mr. Gay with great feeling; "and only for my little woman there, I would as soon be where I was. He was foolish, but a good fellow. He was spoiled by being an elder son. They gave him his own way in everything; and when he was over twenty, he of course wanted to have it in an important matter, and they wouldn't give it to him, so he took it himself."

He was looking steadily at the picture of the young officer. Lady Margaret listened with deep reverence.

"O, indeed; yes. I remember it well. As fine a young man as I ever saw. And his taking out Lord Polehampton's daughter at the county ball, and everyone saying what a pair they were. Melancholy business his throwing himself away on such a marriage."

"Poor lad!" said Mr. Gay, now in a reverie: "I stayed at Bologne as we came through, to see that they took care of his grave."

The group was but of three—Lady Margaret, Mrs. Bligh, and Mr. Gay. All were looking at the picture—Lady Margaret with a sort of tearful air, and Mr. Gay with deep affection. But the sun, as it poured in through the window and lit up the mellowed crimson of the young officer's coat, passed across Mrs. Bligh's cold face. In that face was neither sympathy nor affection, but a smile almost of exultation, it seemed, at least satisfaction. Mr. Gay, turning away his eyes slowly from the picture, saw it, and started.

"Ah, to be sure!" he said quickly; "you knew the whole story. My poor wife told you everything."

"Yes," said Mrs. Bligh, "I knew it all; I daresay more than you did, Mr. Gay. But it had best be all forgotten."

"To be sure," he said. "Look over there, now," he added suddenly, "the little heiress! How she walks with dignity, as if she was married twenty years. I don't know how she picked up that air. She's shy, though she can fool and tomboy it with the youngest. But she'd walk into a room full of company like a little queen, and go up to the lady of the house with her train sweeping behind her. But I've forgotten the squires all out. Those gentry know how to swear. Come along. No? Well, where is her highness? Bring Mrs. Windle, dear,—she must come,—and show her our nags."

The party went round to the stables, which were architectural. Even here the spirit of "Middle-aged Jenkinson" had ruled, and that splendidly, showing that the noble animals who occupied them were in a county where they were held in the highest honour, and lodged and boarded quite luxuriously. Their houses—"boxes"—were warmed

in the winter and ventilated in the summer; they had a whole train of upper and lower servants to wait on them, and lived a sort of Turkish existence after their day's professional exertion, taking their baths, and being shampooed and elegantly coifféd by trained hair-dressers. There were five hunters in the stables, besides hacks, and nags, and many carriage-horses. These ladies and gentlemen were disturbed at their dinner without apology, and led out just as they were, in their stylish red-bordered dressing-gowns, to be gazed at and admired. They were not at all pettish or ill-tempered, as other noble persons might have been at being so disturbed, nay, were not even put out when the servants swept the dressing-gowns off their backs, and left them Eve-like, and not in the least ashamed.

"Walk the Don, John," Miss Diana cried in excitement, for she was directing the whole operations. "Isn't he a noble fellow? That's papa's own horse, and no one else can ride him—and—I wish *he* didn't."

"But he stands for a great deal of money, popsey," said her father; "I am ashamed to tell all he cost me. He's not wicked."

Admiring hands were being passed down over the flanks and quarters of the animal, with the skilful touch of which horse admirers have the knack, so that, though the Don lunged out with his hind feet, there was no danger to the connoisseurs, who kept out of his way adroitly. Heads were put back and on one side, as the great tall creature ambled slowly by, and arched his great neck, and seemed to expostulate with his groom—"What is the use of holding me down so tight?" and then continued his progress in a sort of stately and springing prance.

"There's a fellow to take one over the stiff Garrow country—when he's in good-humour, of course, for he *has* a trick or two."

Horse connoisseurs find great delight in what seems fault-finding, but is indeed only a kindly wishing that certain fancies of their own were present: "Runs off *ever so little* too fine here;" "might be a trifle closer." But these were but faint objections. There was one just man, of stern authority, and whom everyone, and Mr. Gay especially, was anxious to hear,—a low, black-whiskered, thick-set little man, who carried the stick of a hunting-whip in a side-pocket, and whose rigid adherence to the ground seemed to figure his moral adherence to his hunting creed. Everyone knew Pratt, the county-town solicitor, who had a good business, which he mysteriously contrived to combine with the real profession to which he was articleed, namely "horses." We all knew those inimitably racy pictures of hunting-days, which came out but too rarely, in the *Calthorpe Mercury*, and were signed "Buckskin," and headed, perhaps, "A Clipping Day with the Calthorpe Hounds," in which we saw "Reynard," and had "Yoicks, hark for'ard!" and all the dramatic incidents. It was universally agreed in the hunt that Pratt could earn a sum, fixed at about

two thousand a year, up in London, by writing these vigorous hunting-letters; which, if founded in truth, seemed like fatuity on his part, as he was certainly giving them gratis to the *Calthorpe Mercury*.

This gentleman would not say much, though often appealed to, and even eagerly, by Mr. Gay. "Ay, ay! a fair 'orse. I know him well," was his highest praise. But later he was heard to say to a friend in an undertone, "A little too much sealin'-wax in the foreleg;" which seemed to hint at a slightness or brittleness in the limb of the Don; a speech that was overheard by Mr. Gay, whose eye often afterwards settled ruefully, and with misgiving, on the part alluded to.

Other horses were then led out; and then Diana ran over to the head groom. "Now then," said she, "forward with D'Orsay." And in a moment a fine delicately-made satin-coated bay came out, running daintily with his refined limbs, like an elegantly-made dandy as he was. This was D'Orsay—Miss Diana's own horse. She ran up to him. She had on a tiny hat, all over flowers, called to him, patted him, and laid her cheek against his soft coat. The fine creature knew her, and turned his head round to look at her with the strange glance which horses give. The two faces—his great and gaunt and solemn hers small and delicate and laughing—were a contrast.

"He is the king of them all, Mr. Pratt," she cried. "He can do anything. He is my pet, my king of dandies, Mr. Pratt." The gentleman nodded in reply, and sucked the bone-top of his stick. "He'd put your fine horse, John Bull, Mr. Pratt," said she, still speaking from the neck of the favourite, "to all his paces."

Mr. Pratt became enthusiastic in a moment, and walked forward.

"He won't last, you see, Miss Gay," he said mysteriously. "He'll give here," he added, laying his hand on his own calf. "And he a'n't tight enough to lift himself high and together over things. No, no, Miss Gay."

"But you've not seen him out, Mr. Pratt," Diana said less daring. "I tell you you are jealous—I know you are—after that dreadful John Bull, which you think nothing can match."

"See here, Miss Gay," said Mr. Pratt, again growing excited (there were two things only his friends said had that effect—a horse and a glass of something)—"see here, Miss Gay. There a'n't such a 'orse in England. No; nor in the northern nor in the southern counties all put together. And as for D'Orsay there, he can't put himself together so as to get over clean."

Diana's eyes brightened. "Get the bar, then! Get the bar! Bring out my saddle!—D'Orsay darling, they're slandering you."

The grooms in a moment were fitting D'Orsay with his saddle and servitude, and elegant fetters were bound about his noble head.

"Diana dear," her father said gravely, yet amused, "what are you about?"

"You'll see," she said, putting her face close to his. "Poor de-

D'Orsay has a fine opportunity now, and I want to show him off—the handsome creature. Do let me. I'll get my habit."

She had tripped away in a second. D'Orsay lifted his head and looked after her fearfully and doubtfully. Had he been "tricked"?—if so, perhaps he was making up his mind to plunge and kick off the first fellow that should dare profane his noble back.

They moved on to the lawn. Mr. Pratt, examining D'Orsay more critically, travelling up his handsome legs with his eye, and then crossing the chest to his quarters, was now quite convinced he never could put himself together. But here was Miss Diana in a new costume, which, as she is the heroine of this little piece, and whom as such we should naturally like to set in as many engaging lights as possible, may be described in this place. She had put on a little gray-felt hat with a green feather, and her habit fitting her like a French glove. Then we could see what a tiny yet graceful figure hers was. From the excitement a tinge of colour had come into her cheeks. D'Orsay, relieved in his mind, welcomed her by steadily pawing a hole in the grass.

"Papa is to put me up," she cried; "no one else!" And her father performed that office.

"You are a funny child," he said.

Funny she might be; but the combination of the two figures—hers and D'Orsay's, both so refined and "well-bred"—was delightful. She was now at home; just as a pretty yacht is at home when the sails fill and she begins to move; and here was D'Orsay ambling softly over the grass, just to get himself into comfortable warmth. Her soft voice called out as she went by, "Put up the bar as high as Mr. Pratt wants." And that gentleman, calmly eager for the investigation of truth, pointed critically with his hunting-stick to a particular height, and said that would try him fairly. Round swept D'Orsay and his light mistress, swaying in as they did so. One touch of a little whip, both were bounding along, and D'Orsay was over in a second, landing lightly and airily. Yet the critical audience saw at that select trial that there was justice in what Mr. Pratt had said, and that D'Orsay had the tendency common to other beaux and dandies—"not to put himself together" when he made an exertion. Mr. Pratt, however, graciously allowed the horse had done fairly.

"But I tell you what, Miss Diana," added he with an unusual energy, and digging in the ground with his hunting-handle, "he's got a wild touch in his eye. You wouldn't hold him in, if he took it into his head to bolt one fine morning. Your wrist a'n't strong enough. I couldn't hold him. And see here, Miss Diana. If this horse should be wanting his head one fine morning—see here," and he pointed without much illustrative meaning to a hole in the grass, recently made with his whip, "you'd have to give it to him."

Miss Diana looked a little alarmed at this prophecy, then suddenly

recollected herself, and patting his satin neck, said, "Well, and I should give him his dear old head if he wanted it. And why shouldn't I?"

"Well then, Miss Diana," continued Mr. Pratt, gathering fervour in his vaticination, "if ever that 'ere 'orse should once get his head—"

"Stop, Mr. Pratt—stop him saying these dreadful things!" said Diana. "I don't care; D'Orsay is a nobleman, and has gentle blood, and is not to be compared to John Bull and such-like creatures."

And with a toss of her head Miss Diana walked away beside D'Orsay, with his bridle in her hand.

Now the company had scattered a good deal and dropped away. The manufacturer's family were among those looking on,—Mr. Crowder and his wife, and Miss Kitty Crowder, the tall young lady, who had been about the grounds and gardens with a young gentleman of good fortune. She was a fine girl—as mentioned, tall, strong, aggressive, and overpowering to timid natures. But one rude-spoken and elderly colonel, hearing this praise, put up his glass—"Fine girl, d'ye say? Fine fifteen 'stun,' I say;" which coarse language was indeed an exaggeration of some private views about her.

She came to the front pushing, and stooped forward. "What's all this? What's going on? O, look, Mr. Wilson, they're showing the horses. Well, I can tell you we don't see this always. What I admire in Miss Diana is her perfect self-possession, and what would I give for such a gift? Now I could no more bring myself to get up on a horse in that way and jump before people than I could fly."

As a matter of comparison, the "fine girl" would have appeared to infinitely greater advantage mounted on a spirited charger than in suspending the laws of nature and soaring through the air in the way she spoke of. But no one knew better than Kitty Crowder that the amount of public attention and admiration is constant and invariable, and that where any favoured object attracts a greater portion, it is only drawn from the shares of others who suffer in proportion. As he or she ascends, so we go down. Miss Kitty, having many disadvantages to struggle against—the hated iron-foundry to begin with, the more plebeian airs of her parents, the dress-coat in the morning, &c.—had found that she could not afford to lose a point, and could only hold her own by being a sort of "Garibaldian" in society. She always went as it were with her musket slung behind her, which she had cocked, and presented on a moment's provocation. Need it be said that she was a true "officer's girl," ranging among the warriors, delighting in their company with an almost manly frankness, and admitting them to a charming freedom of speech? As the regiments came and stayed and went away again, with that economical fitfulness which characterises the mind of the British War-office, they bore away with them legends and stories of Miss Crowder; and over many a mess-table in the United Kingdom the name of "Kitty Crowder" was mentioned with affection—nay, rather *too familiarly*. So do the warriors distinguish those whom they delight

to honour. And yet the spectacle of a woman thus fighting her battle gallantly and single-handed, all up the hill, dragging after her such burdens as a vulgar father and mother, and battling on, it may be, a little unscrupulously, may challenge our admiration, and, in a sense, our respect.

When Diana came back in great delight at having vindicated her friend, Miss Kitty received her with the delight and excess of warm and admiring wonder which is one of the happiest light-skirmishing weapons known to our young ladies. Diana had at first liked Miss Kitty, and was inclined to make her into a bosom friend, with all the effusion which gentle timid natures have for such grand she-captains. But as there was a certain honesty and candour about the other which could not take the trouble to conceal any little spite or jealousy, Diana soon came to regard her with an undefined feeling of suspicion and discomfort in her company; symptoms by which the Garibaldian was not in the least disturbed, for she knew her own power and the other's delicacy, and was secure of getting all advantages to be drawn from Gay Court, without the slightest risk of check or coolness on the side of her friend. Besides, Mr. Gay had joined in the cry of her being a "fine a girl," and rather pitied the social condition of her father and mother, who he said were "good, coarse, worthy people," whom he was determined to stand by and back up.

Now she was standing over our little Diana, overwhelming her with voluble compliments. "I could not make out what was going on. It seemed to me and Mr. Wilson like people at a circus.—Didn't it, Mr. Wilson?—And such courage too, dear. To see your little figure on that great horse in the middle, and all those people standing round and looking on. I should have fainted.—Don't you think so, Mr. Wilson?"

"Not at all," said that gentleman, with the frankness which all Miss Kitty's friends maintained towards her; "indeed you wouldn't. I've seen you go through more than that."

The Garibaldian, to do her justice, had no hypocrisy, and had her mask unslung in a moment. "You'll do the fainting for me," she said. "What was that story about Mr. Wilson and the sunk fence? Gates are a delightful invention, Mr. Wilson?"

That gentleman coloured. "No man in his senses would have taken it," he said colouring, "at least—"

"Then Mr. Gay and half the hunt were out of theirs," she said laughing, "for they got over.—Tell me, my dear, what's all this about the lord who is coming—and the lord's son? When are they coming—are they to stay long? What's to be the divarshion, as the Irish say? Who are they at all?—tell me about them, do, dear."

And now grown affectionate, Miss Kitty's arm was round Diana's slight waist. This endearment for the time quite won Diana's heart. She always felt for her sisters when she saw them suffering from strokes such as *Mr. Wilson* had so unkindly given.

"He is an old friend of papa's, and he has been obliged to live an immense deal abroad on account of his wife. She has got well at last, and papa has not seen him for years; and as my birthday is coming on, why, he thought we should have a little fun here. And you know papa is so good to me, he will do whatever I ask or propose. And he says you're to come and stay also."

Mr. Pratt's tax-cart now came round.

"Good-bye, Miss Gay," he said, as he took the reins; "but Dorsay's no 'orse, I must tell you."

Mr. Gay was coming up.

"What, taking away D'Orsay's character? What's wrong with him? What d'ye mean, Pratt?"

Diana tossed her head.

"Mr. Pratt has been at this all day. He's quite jealous of my poor horse, compared with his own enormous dreadful creature."

"What!" cried Mr. Gay. "Why, he'd beat his head off, over any country! Pratt, are you serious in such a criticism, and putting your Flemish dray-horse against my Diana's Arabian?"

Mr. Pratt swung himself up into his cart—what indeed seems to be part of the enjoyment of that vehicle—and drawing on what looked a pair of metal gloves, said slowly:

"There's to be a drag-hunt at Badgerly next week. If you think all that, Mr. Gay, you can see then."

Diana laughed with delight.

"A drag-hunt!—charming! The very thing!"

"Then I tell you what, Master Pratt: if you come on the back of your great animal, I'll match him for a fifty on the back of D'Orsay, the stakes to be handed over to the owner of the horse—there, ducksey-cums!" and he looked at her with fondness.

"Done, Mr. Gay!" said the other, taking out his book and pencil. "It's down." Then he took his "ribbons" and drove away.

"O, what fun—what fun!" said Diana. "A race, a real race! I sha'n't sleep for thinking of it. Poor darling D'Orsay to be talked of in that way!"

"Yes," said Mr. Gay; "and I've heard the fellow goes about the country talking of *me*, saying I have no eye for a horse, and all that. I don't believe he's a judge himself at all. I wish I'd made it a hundred now.—Well, you'll come to us, Miss Crowder?"

"O, how kind, how nice!" said the Garibaldian, pressing her friend's small waist in a rapture of gratitude. "I don't know what to say to you. I shall be so glad to get away from our dungeon. No one ever comes near us. We have always to be running after them, and writing, and fixing days. Now I like people pouring in of themselves, coming spontaneously—like here. Do ask the officers, dear; *lots of them*. They'll be only too happy to come. I'll get you Major

Spring, and Captain Gilpin. They are all charming ; and Captain Gilpin so funny. I'll ask him to bring his dress, and do the knife-grinder."

Diana's eyes began to sparkle. "O, how nice that will be! And what dress?"

"Of course the real rags. He saw it on a real grinder in the street, and got him up to the barracks and gave him ten shillings for the whole. They weren't worth sixpence; but, as Captain Gilpin says, they were worth pounds to *him*; as he couldn't have got anything like them made for ten times the money. And he had them boiled down in a copper by the mess-man—only think! And it will make you die laughing. But you must tell me beforehand, to secure him in time."

This splendid programme quite impressed Diana, who looked with some awe at her friend. Any little plan brought out suddenly in this fashion became bathed in golden clouds on the instant, and quite dazzled her.

"What fun we shall have!" she said.

"O, he comes to us again and again," said the Garibaldian. "You are sure young Chimeleigh is to be with you?"

"O, certain! His father is to bring him. Why?"

"Because, dear," said the Garibaldian with an air of mock innocence, "I have marked him down as my property. I have a feeling that he is charming; and that we should get on delightfully. But you wouldn't help a poor girl, that has no advantages at home, and who, if she had such advantages as others have, would do as well, my dear. But your mamma and papa don't know papa would marry me to one of his great girders or marine engine-boilers, and think me splendidly off. But no, you would not; no girl ever helps a friend."

Was not this an artful challenge? It was touching our Diana in the most sympathising corner of her gentle heart; and at once another dazzling plan suggested itself—to make the splendid young Chimeleigh the captive of her dear friend Kitty's charms—not of the Kitty beside her, but of the romantic, helpless girl, "who had no advantages at home," drawn so skilfully by Kitty herself. The arrangement was sealed on the spot by some fervent kisses.

Now the party began to disperse. The agricultural faces of the "squires" were rather flushed with the unaccustomed champagne so early. But it was time to go. Gigs and horses were coming round. The iron-master's carriage—a gandy, glittering, canary-coloured edifice on wheels, with servants in a very glowing crimson livery (Mr. Lugard had said to Diana it was like "a broken damson-tart")—came heavily up. Mr. Crowder heaved himself in heavily, as though he were a Lord Mayor. Everyone had had a most delightful morning.

CHAPTER VII.

MOTHER AND SON.

ON that high road along which indeed were disposed most of the residences of our characters, and at about a mile's distance from Gay Court, was the little villa where Mrs. Bligh lived—a small unpretending house, bright as new cream, kept without a speck, close to the road, with its top-story peeping warily over the edge of a low wall much as one of her “nice” maids did when the coach was heard passing by. It had been an old house, altered, modernised, and beautified much as our thrifty housewives will shape and decorate a dress of an old cut; but, like such remodelled garments, the little piecing and stretching here and there betrayed the old date. There were pretty greenhouses (which, when the sun shone, glistened like a fountain petrified), pretty little gardens, orchards, &c.—all on a small scale.

There she lived all the year round by herself, not by any means recluse, dressing handsomely and with taste, and always looking forward to the visits of her son, who came down some three or four times in the year. Clergyman, squire, and other neighbours said she was wonderfully clever “long-headed” woman. Mr. Gay wished he knew about as much of the world as was in her little finger.

“I declare she’s as fond of that son of hers as I am of my little dame at home; but my lord up there in town at his briefs, he doesn’t like her as much as my poppet does her daddy—that couldn’t be beat. Why don’t he have her to live with him in town, and make his breakfast for him like a gentleman? He’s some calculation about that of his head, depend upon it; for he is a deuced knowing fellow. I’m very odd.”

But by and by a nearer acquaintance with the lady spoken of will show that injustice was done to the son, and that the mother had excellent reasons for remaining down in the country.

On this evening she was walking up and down her garden, with her eyes on the ground, her hands joined behind her, and her feet stepping forward with a firm regimental tread. The time was about six o’clock. She was dressed in her velvet, which so became her, and her figure was picturesque. At times she stopped, and would call to the window, “Hannah, look again, and see if he is coming.”

After one of these orders, Hannah called suddenly, “Here he is, see a fly at the top of the hill.”

In a few seconds more a fly with a portmanteau was at the railway gate, and a young man had jumped out, and the lady, when she heard the news, had gone hastily into her drawing-room and sat down on the sofa. She had time to look in the glass and settle her iron-gray hair, and then sit queen-like on the sofa to receive her son. In a moment

a voice was heard outside, and a young man, entering hastily, was embracing her.

He was broad-shouldered, strongly-built, with fair hair, a broad high forehead, pale blue eyes that wandered thoughtfully over to the face of anyone who made a remark, and rested on that face as if weighing the force of what had been said. He had a light moustache and small beard, and certainly looked an experienced man of about thirty years of age; and yet he was no more than two or three-and-twenty.

They talked long on the sofa, until Hannah came to say dinner was ready; and then mother and son walked in with some ceremony. It was very choice; each dish was small, and had been prepared with care.

"I have got you all your favourite things, Robert. I know what you always liked; and there is your favourite wine."

Robert shook his head. "I have to give up all those good things now, mother," he said; "Doctor Saunders has issued orders—the plainest of the plain for me in future."

"Ah, I had forgot," she said; "how stupid! Then Hannah shall do a chop for you, and you shall eat, and we shall not speak until you have done."

"But that will be so stupid for you; and you are taking nothing."

"I like to sit in this way and see you eat, provided you enjoy it. Go on—do, Robert. Take some more of this; you must be hungry after that long journey."

At night, when the lamp was lighted, mother and son were seated in the drawing-room talking together. They did not rise till past midnight. They consulted very seriously together. What they said will show the character of both. After some preface she came to a point that seemed to be on her mind.

"And now about your getting on, Robert. You are really doing so well?"

"Nothing could be better. They tell me there is no junior of my standing so forward. I am so thankful. I assure you, mother, the day and night together is not long enough for all I have to get through. It is so delightful to be in full swinging work. To start with exhilaration in the morning—finish off this—finish off that—then snatch breakfast—then on again—more work—snatch dinner, and light the lamps for a good, comfortable, quiet, delicious study—and all the time know that for every hour golden guineas are coming in, or rather gold and silver guineas—shillings and sovereigns. I wouldn't give up the shilling, mother. Buller, my Q.C., I assure you, my dear mother, I know can do nothing without me. That is *such* a back to me; for the solicitors know it, and he is so run on, a word from him to them—'Send that to Mr. Bligh, he knows the papers'—is quite enough."

"But, my dear Robert, take care of what you have done in interrupting all this run of good fortune. You know I would give my health for yours any day, or my life either; but you look strong and well, and take care this is not fanciful."

The young man paused a little, and answered gravely, "Do you know I was afraid of that myself for a long time; but at last it came to symptoms there was no mistaking—so queer about the head, you know; and once *that* went, mother, then indeed all would be up. But I shouldn't have minded myself, only for Saunders, the doctor, a good friend, who said, as sure as I lived, in six months I *must* break down. He is a barrister's doctor, and has known so many do the same. You know I have some self-denial, and so I rationally agreed with him to stop in time and take a month or two's rest, which will quite set me up."

Mrs. Bligh looked at him thoughtfully.

"You are always sensible, Robert. I wonder where you got that command of yourself. Another, 'getting on' like you, would not have power to stop in his full course—and would have worked himself into softening of the brain or blindness."

"There is no merit," said he, smiling; "better to lose a little than lose all. I tell them it is drawing bills on your life. I felt a little ashamed about Buller, who is fagging himself for a wife and family in the regular style—takes his dinner standing, and all that. By the way," he added with a little hesitation, "I wanted to tell you about *that* also."

"About what, dear?" she said.

"About Buller and his family. He has three sons and"—with hesitation—"one daughter. He is sure to be a Vice-chancellor one of these days."

Mrs. Bligh's brows contracted into a frown and she drew herself up.

"Surely—"

"No, no, no," he said good-humouredly; "don't think of such a thing, mother. I was only wishing to consult you. People tell *me* it would be a very good thing—that a hundred others would *give* their eyes for the same chance; and that it would bind Buller to *me* securely; that if he were made Vice-chancellor, I should come in *for* something very good too; and in short, you see, mother—it might *be* considered."

Mrs. Bligh remained silent; drawn up rigidly, with her eyes on the carpet reflectively.

"Well," she said at last, "you have mentioned all the advantages—the business ones—but you have said nothing about the girl;—what about her? Do you like her? Does she care for you?"

Bligh slowly raised his shoulders.

"Well," he said, "it has not come exactly to that. She's a good girl *enough*—a barrister's daughter. I was thinking of the advantages—"

"Then," said his mother quickly, "you must *not*. Don't let it near you. Dismiss it altogether. A man of your genius and talents must look higher than that. There is a great game before you, if it is played properly. You have all the qualities for it, and that which is the rarest and most precious—caution and self-restraint; for every one breaks down on that. I know that you have learned how to *wait* for the right moment, and to know it when it comes."

"But, my dear mother, what do you mean?"

"A humdrum lawyer's daughter," she went on, "with a beggarly thousand pounds! A wretched place, and broken-down health, going down to a dark office every day! Would you get to know people of rank and influence? Would they come to you in your office? My dear Robert, money is getting so plenty, and will be getting so plenty by and by, and those comforts which money brings are so common, that talent is every day rising in the market, and is getting scarcer too. They'll discover no gold-fields of *that* article."

"Very just, mother," he said thoughtfully; "but what would you have me do?"

She went on quickly:

"I have been laying out plans for you. It is most fortunate you are down here. I know what can be done, and what you must do. *Gay Court is the place.*"

"What, Diana!—O, nonsense!"

"Sense, though. I know it, and I know how it can be done. What is *your* difficulty, Robert—flying too high?"

"Yes, I thought so."

"My dear Robert, that is the most fatal delusion of all in the world; and the best advantage for the wise man. Nothing is too high, provided you only show you *think* yourself high enough for it. If you are timorous and apologetic, you will be taken at your own worth, and set down as presumptuous. Am I right?"

He was listening thoughtfully.

"It is quite true," he said; "but—"

"No people are so accessible as great people—people of rank. So with people whom you think are above you and 'will not think of you.' My dear Robert, I know women. The determined perseverance of a man, even if he be every way inferior, is not at all so disagreeable. They think a compliment a homage; and with this basis for a *man of genius* to work on, you see—"

"No one knows and admires your sense more than I do, mother," he said; "but I confess in this matter I don't see anything. You know how I used to admire her. She is a brilliant creature. Even when I was thinking of Buller's daughter her image used to rise. But to think of this bright girl choosing a Digest, a Book of Reports, for a husband! She who was accustomed to everything delightful, *cheerful! And her father—*"

"What folly!" broke in Mrs. Bligh warmly. "You say, Robert, there is sense in what I say, and yet you *don't* think so. Look at me. You know what I was. Your mother. I was what is called 'poor.' But I was a born lady in mind, Robert. We were twelve brothers and sisters—my father a poor broken man; my mother a helpless woman, overwhelmed with her cares and responsibilities,—sisters and brothers a perfect herd, that could do nothing for themselves but eat and walk. I had the only head among them; and I determined I would work for myself and rise. I never told you, Robert, how I did it. But you will say the difficulties were insurmountable. Think of a poor girl struggling out of a slough like that. But I did."

Her son took her hand kindly.

"It was no scheming, or from no adventurous views, but self-preservation. I should have sunk. Some charitable uncle had left us fifty pounds a-piece. They spent all theirs out of hand; but I kept mine. And when theirs was gone, they came on me for my wretched scrap. But I refused. I wanted it for what would benefit them as well as me; but of course being a herd they could not understand that. We had an aunt, who knew some 'nice' people, and used to go to Bath now and then,—a cold, selfish old maid. For years I had tried to get her to take me; for I knew I had good looks and good sense, and that once there I would have a chance. At last with some little money I had saved I had to bribe her, and she agreed. You know the rest. I triumphed over all difficulties, and got to Bath. Your father saw me, and I married a *gentleman*. I did it myself, and in spite of all difficulties. He was rich then, though he died poor. For a poor helpless girl without money to carry out a plan of that sort and succeed seemed more impossible than what I want *you* to do."

Robert Bligh remained silent and thoughtful.

"Now will you make me a promise," she went on—"or two or three promises—that you will give up the Buller girl, as you call her, for the present?"

"My dearest mother," he said cheerfully, "to be sure."

"Then, that you will work yourself with all your will and help me as far as you can in what I propose? I have prepared the way already. You know what privileged people mothers are. They are the only people tolerated in puffing their relations: they are admired for doing so. I have talked to her about you; and— Do you remember that business at the school?"

"With Dick Lugard?—to be sure."

"She was always a little curious about that—of course flattered, as any girl would be, to have even two boys fighting for her. I told her what was the real cause—namely, that you had taken up the cudgels for your poor old mother. Ah, Robert, I cannot tell you how I felt that, my dear child!"

Robert took her hand, and kissed her cheek. "Old mother indeed!"

he said. "What folly! You want a compliment. Buller says you're the handsomest woman of your time he has ever met."

"Foolish!" said she; but by an instinctive motion her hand went up to her head and smoothed her hair.

Who shall talk of such as vanity? Men's conceit is the vanity of monkeys, and purely selfish; women's, in the main, is but one more token of affection and homage—decking themselves, and keeping their charms fresh, but to retain the affection of the grand creatures who own and control them.

"Lugard," she went on softly, "or his father, I suspect, contrived to make her believe that it was all your triumph and overbearing way on the victory. That was artful. But I told her the other day how nobly you had behaved. She was very curious, and comes back to it often. She is just the same; but you will have to struggle for it. Young Lugard will be here himself."

"He will!" said Bligh, starting.

"Yes; with all the tinsel of the army on him. His father, I can see, is bent on it, and means to find him the brains; but they are both fools!"

"Dick Lugard coming?" repeated Bligh, thinking to himself very earnestly. "Is he going to stop with them?"

"Yes. You think that is a great and unfair advantage?"

"Well—" began Robert, smiling.

"Well, it is one you shall have also. Mr. Gay has asked you. There is a lord coming down—a man of great influence; and your wise head, Robert, can do something there incidentally. O, the time won't be thrown away, you'll see. One day in the world does more than months in a study. O,—and this is another difficulty: Lord Bellman's son is coming—that young Chimeleigh—and I know *that* is what Mr. Gay is thinking of."

"And, mother, *you* want me to struggle against all these influences. Absurd!"

"Let me hear of no difficulties," she said, rising and beginning to light her lamp. "In the number of candidates is safety. With all the love of folly, girls of our time have *nature* in them still. As I told you, I can see the reign of money will go by. The thing is not such a rare or wonderful thing after all. Penniless girls are married for their beauty; why not penniless men for their wit or talents?"

Her lamp was now in her hand, and its light played on her face, showing its rather stern lines all lit up with a soft pleasure.

"I feel happier and lighter to-night than I have done for long. Do you know, I feel as I did at the hotel on the night I entered Bath. Others would have felt dismal and low-spirited; but I was full of heart; and, my dear Robert, I am so happy you are with me. Do you think your old mother—for I *am* your old mamma—a dreadful schemer? No, you don't. Getting on in the world is not scheming:

it is living honourably, and getting the fruit of the talents God has given us. The fools and propriety-people—who *can't* get on, but would if they could—turn up their eyes. Good-night, my dear boy. We shall have Diana yet!"

And she walked solemnly, as she always did, to the door. Then she looked back, and nodded to him full of confidence. The clock on the chimney-piece had "tinged" twelve with no solemnity of chime. It was like a crying child wanting to be taken to bed.

Robert Bligh remained behind, and began to walk up and down and think—a habit of his every night before he went to bed. With this motion he had grown to like thinking over everything, planning things for the next day, and, besides, giving himself a little *divertissement* at the close of the day's hard labour by setting little pictures from memory before himself, and, what was better, painting in more gorgeous scenery for the future—the next best entertainment to dreaming. Many an hour had he given to this little relaxation, and had seen himself high in glory on the bench, or lower, pleading and gaining dramatic causes; and very often too the dust-clouds rising from the law-books cleared away, and a delicate and bright figure rose up before and entertained him, for the boy's love still lingered. But, as the reader will have guessed, there was a greater passion than love in this gentleman's heart. His mind was of a highly Scotch turn, and that belief in advancement in the world was his inherited creed; to that everything was to bend.

In this waking dream he heard the clock give a smart ting—"one!" Then he took his lamp, and walked away softly to bed.



BELGRAVIA

DECEMBER 1867

DEAD-SEA FRUIT

A. Nobel

BY THE AUTHOR OF "LADY AUDLEY'S SECRET," ETC.

CHAP. XV. ALPHA AND OMEGA.

THERE were some days on which M. de Bergerac had no work for his secretary, and on such occasions the young man was free to dispose of himself as he pleased. These days Eustace Thorburn devoted partly to reading and meditation, partly to the delightful duty of ministering to Helen's caprices—if, indeed, the word "caprice" can fairly be used in relation to anyone so entirely amiable as Mademoiselle de Bergerac.

Happily for the ambitious hopes of the student, there were some days on which Helen asked no service from her willing slave, and when the slave could find no excuse for intruding on the privacy of his mistress as she read or practised or worked in her pretty drawing-room.

On these leisure days Eustace made good progress with his own studies. He cherished the ideas of the ancients as to the requirements of a poet, and thought that whatever was learnt by Virgil should be at least attempted by every student who would fain sacrifice at the shrine of the Muses. On dull days he was wont to spend the morning in his own room, working his hardest; but in fine weather he preferred a solitary ramble in the park, or on the banks of the river, with his own thoughts and a volume of classic prose or poetry for company.

He set out for a day's ramble one fine sharp morning in December the same hour in which a gentleman arrived at Windsor by the morning express from town.

This gentleman left his luggage and his servant at the station, and went out to walk from Windsor to Greenlands, as Eustace had done nearly six months before. He was a man of middle size and of middle age, with a slender but muscular form, and a fair patrician face—a

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face with an aquiline nose and cold bright-blue eyes that might have belonged to some Danish Viking, but a face in which the rugged grandeur of the old warrior-blood was tempered by the effeminacy of half-a-dozen generations of courtiers.

There was an inexpressible languor in the droop of the eyelids, an extreme hauteur in the carriage of the head. The mouth was perfect in its modelling, but the lips had the sensuous beauty of a Greek statue, too feminine in their soft harmonious line, and out of character with the rest of the face.

Such was Harold Jerningham, owner of Greenlands in Berkshire, and of the bijou house in Park-lane. Fifty-two years of an existence that may be fairly termed exhaustive had left their impress upon him. There were traces of the crow's-feet at the corners of the clear full blue eyes, and sharp lines across the fair proud brow. The waving auburn hair was sprinkled ever so lightly with the first snow-flakes of life's winter, and the auburn moustache and beard owed something of their tint to the care of an assiduous valet; but Mr. Jerningham was the kind of man who looks his handsomest at fifty years of age; and there were few faces in foreign court or ballroom that won more notice than his on those rare occasions on which the *blasé* English traveller condescended to appear in public.

The lively Celts amongst whom Mr. Jerningham made a languid endeavour to get rid of his existence regarded that gentleman as a striking example of the English "spleen," and were prepared to hear at any moment that Sir Jerningham had made an unusually careful toilet that morning, and had then proceeded, with insular frigidity, to cut himself the throat *à la manière Anglaise*.

For the last seven or eight years the world had found no subject for scandal in the life of Harold Jerningham. It seemed as if those wild-oats which he had been sowing more or less industriously ever since he left the University must needs be at last exhausted, so quiet, and even studious, was the existence of the gentleman who appeared now in London, anon in Vienna, to-day in Paris, to-morrow in Norway; and who seemed always to support the burden of his being with the same heroic endurance, and to combine the cold creed of the Stoic with the agreeable practice of the Epicurean.

He had lived for himself alone, and had sinned for his own pleasure; and if his life within the last decade had been comparatively pure and harmless, it was because the bitter apples of the Dead Sea could tempt him no longer by their outward beauty. He was unutterably weary of the inner bitterness, and even the outward beauty had lost its charm. If he had ceased to be a sinner, it was that he was tired of sinning rather than that he lamented his past offences.

A sudden fancy, engendered out of the very emptiness and weariness of his brain, had brought him to England, and the same fancy brought him to Greenlands. He wanted to see the old abandoned

place, which had echoed with his childish laughter in the days when he could still be amused; the woods that had been peopled by his dreams, in the days when he had not yet lost the power to dream. He wanted to see these things; and, more than these things, he wanted to see the one friend whose society was pleasant, whose friendship was in some wise precious to him.

"I have rather gloried in outraging the prejudices of my fellow-men," he had said to himself sometimes when anatomising his own character in that critical and meditative mood which was habitual to him; "but I believe I should scarcely like Theodore de Bergerac to think ill of me. It is not in me to play the hypocrite, and yet I fancy I have always contrived to keep the darker side of my nature hidden from him."

The master of Greenlands happened to be in an unusually reflective mood, and his reflections of to-day were tinged with a certain despondency. This nineteenth of December was his birthday, the fifty-second anniversary of his first appearance upon the stage of life; and the reflections which the day brought with it were far from pleasant. For the first time in his existence Mr. Jerningham had this morning been struck by the notion that it was a dreary thing to eat a solitary breakfast on the anniversary of his birth, uncheered by the voice of kinsman or friend invoking blessings on his head. The luxurious little dining-room in Park-lane glowed in the ruddy fire-light, and glittered with all the chaste splendour of Mr. Jerningham's art-treasures, as he trifled with his tea and toast, far too tired of all the delicacies of this earth to care for the bloated livers of Strasbourg geese or the savoury flesh of Bayonne pigs. The room in which he had breakfasted, and the table that had been spread for him, formed a picture which a painter of still-life might have dreamed of; but it had seemed very blank and dismal to Harold Jerningham on this particular occasion, when an accidental glance at the date of his *Times* reminded him that his fifty-second year had come to an end.

He resolved forthwith upon a visit to the only friend whose sincerity he believed in, and the only living creature from whose lips good wishes would seem other than a conventionality.

"I suppose it is because I am getting old that such gloomy fancies come into my head," he said to himself, as he walked from the station to Greenlands. "It never struck me before that a childless man's latter days must needs be blank and empty. Must it be so? Which is the lesser of the two evils—to be the father of an heir who languishes for his heritage, or to know that our lands and houses must pass to a stranger, when the door of the last narrow dwelling has been sealed upon its silent inhabitant? Who knows? Is not existence at best a choice of evils—and the negative misery is always the lesser. Better to suffer the dull sense of loneliness than the sharp agony of ingratitude. Better to be *Timon* than *Lear*."

This is how the philosopher argued with himself on his fifty-second birthday, as he walked the lonely road between Windsor and Greenlands.

"Dear old Theodore!" he said to himself; "it is nine years since I have seen him—three or four since I have heard from him. God grant I may find him well—and happy!"

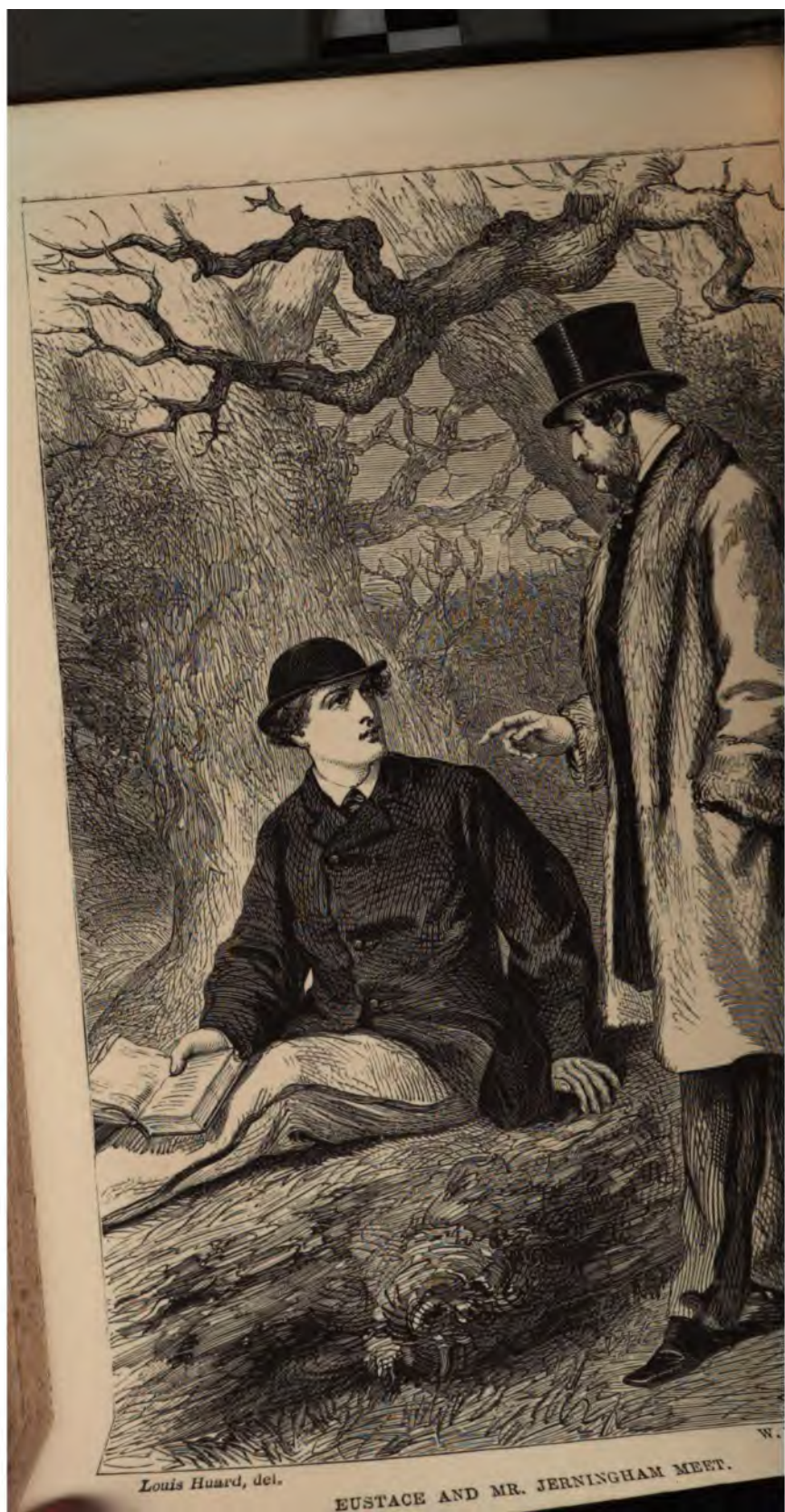
Mr. Jerningham had walked this road often in his boyhood and youth—very often in the days when he had been an Eton boy, and had boldly levanted from his tutor's house, and crossed that purely imaginative boundary, the Thames, for an afternoon's holiday at home, where the horses and dogs and servants seemed alike rejoiced by the presence of the young heir. He had walked the same road at many different periods of his existence; in every one of which his own pleasure had been the chief desire of his heart; not always to be achieved, at any cost, and rarely achieved with ultimate satisfaction to himself.

He had travelled this road in a barouche one bright summer afternoon with his handsome young wife by his side, and the bells of three different parish churches ringing their joy-peal in honour of his coming. He remembered what a folly and a mockery the joy-bells had seemed; and how very little nearer and dearer his wife's beauty had been to him than the beauty of a picture seen and admired in one hour, to be forgotten in the next.

"I think I was once in love," he said to himself, when he meditated on the mistakes and follies of his past life. "Yes, I believe that I was once in love—fondly, foolishly, deeply in love. But it came to an end—too soon, perhaps. In his youth a man has so many dreams, and the newest always seems the brightest. Well, they are all over—dreams and follies; the end has come at last, and it is rather dreary. I suppose I have no right to complain. I have lived my life. There are men who seem in the very heyday of existence at fifty years of age; but those are not men who have taken life as I have taken it. It is the old story of the candle burnt at both ends. The illumination is very grand, but the candle suffers."

Mr. Jerningham entered the park by that small gate through which Eustace Thorburn had passed six months before. Greenlands was very beautiful even in this bleak winter weather, but there was a desolation and wildness in its aspect eminently calculated to foster melancholy thoughts. It was by the express wish of the master that the park had been permitted to assume this aspect of wildness and decay. "My good man," he had said to his bailiff, "I assure you all this trimness and primness, which you make so much fuss about, is to the last degree unnecessary so far as I am concerned. I shall never again come here to live for any length of time; and when I do come, it pleases me best to come and go as a stranger. Let those poor old dawdling men in the grounds take matters as quietly as they like. You will pay them *their wages* on Saturday just the same as if they did wonders in the





Louis Huard, del.

EUSTACE AND MR. JERNINGHAM MEET.

way of sweeping and pruning and clipping. I don't want Greenlands to look like a Dutchman's garden; and I am glad to think that there is some kind of use in the world for poor dawdling old men who only excel in the art of not doing things."

The bailiff stared, but he obeyed his master, whose reputation for eccentricity had long been established at Greenlands.

In the chill wintry morning the desolation of the place was more than usually apparent, and Mr. Jerningham, being on this particular occasion inclined to contemplate every object on the darker side, was strongly impressed by the dreariness of the long avenue, where the bare black branches of the elms swayed to and fro against the winter sky, and where the withered leaves drifted before him with every gust of biting winter wind.

It was in the avenue that had been the grand approach to the mansion in the days when the great world visited Greenlands, that Mr. Jerningham came upon a young man sitting on the trunk of a fallen tree, reading. To see anyone seated on so cold a morning was in itself a fact for remark; but this hardy young student had the air of a man who takes his ease on a sofa in his own snug study, so absorbed was his manner, so comfortable his attitude. Approaching nearer, the *blasé* wanderer in many lands perceived that the young student's face was flushed as if with recent exercise, and, while perceiving this, he could not fail to observe that the face was one of the handsomest, and at the same time the noblest, he had ever looked upon. As an artist, Harold Jerningham was impressed by the perfect outline of that grand fair face; as an observer of mankind, he was conscious that the stamp of high thoughts had been set upon the broad brow, and that the light of a pure young soul shone out of the eyes that were slowly raised to look at him as he drew near the log on which the student reclined. He went near enough to see the title of the book the young man was reading. It was one of the Platonic Dialogues in Greek.

"Ho, ho!" thought Mr. Jerningham; "I took my young gentleman for a gamekeeper, or a son of my bailiff's; but even in this levelling age I doubt if gamekeepers or embryo bailiffs are so far advanced in Greek. I suppose he is a friend of De Bergerac's."

Having arrived at this conclusion, Mr. Jerningham proceeded to accost the young dreamer, for whom that leafless avenue was peopled day by day with the images of all that was greatest and most beautiful in the golden age of this earth, and to whom the romantic desolation of Greenlands had become far dearer within the last six months than it had ever been to the lord of mansion and park, forest and upland.

"Do you not find it rather cold for that kind of reading?" asked the proprietor of the avenue.

The frank young face was turned to him with a smile.

"Not at all; I have been walking for the last hour, and feel as warm as if it were midsummer."

He looked just a little wonderingly at Mr. Jerningham as he spoke. He knew all the visitors to the Grange, and assuredly this gentleman in a fur-lined overcoat was not one of them. Some stranger perhaps, who had found the gate open, and had strayed into the park out of curiosity.

"You seem accustomed to this kind of open-air study," asked the traveller, seating himself on one end of the fallen log, in order to get a better view of the student's face. It was only the listless curiosity of an idler that beguiled him into loitering thus. He had for the latter years of his life been at best only a loiterer upon the highways and byeways of this world, and the interest which he felt in this young student of Plato was the same kind of interest he might have felt in a solitary little Savoyard with white mice, or some semi-idiotic old reaper toiling under a southern sun; an interest by no means so warm as that which a picture or a statue inspired in this jaded wanderer.

"Yes," replied the young man, "I spend all my leisure mornings in the park, reading and thinking. I fancy one thinks better when one walks in such a place as this."

"If by 'one' you speak of *yourself*, I have no doubt you are right; but if your 'one' means mankind in general, I am sure you are wrong. My dreariest thoughts have come to me under these trees this morning."

The young man's face was quick to express sympathy in a look that was half wonder, half pity.

"How quick a man's sympathies are at his age!" thought Harold Jerningham, "and how soon they wear out!"

And then after a pause he added aloud, "You live somewhere near at hand, I suppose?"

"I live very near at hand; I live in the park."

"At the great house?" exclaimed Mr. Jerningham. "After all, my handsome young student will turn out to be the self-educated son or nephew of my housekeeper," he thought, not without some slight sense of vexation, for he had been studying the young man's profile, and had given him credit for patrician blood on the strength of the delicate modelling of nose and chin.

"No, not at the great house; I live with M. de Bergerac, at the Grange."

"You live with De Bergerac! You are not his—no, he has no son."

"I have the honour to be his secretary."

"Indeed! and an Englishman! Has De Bergerac turned political agitator, or Orleanist conspirator, that he must needs have a secretary?"

"No, it is my privilege to assist M. de Bergerac in the preparation of a great literary work."

"I am pleased to hear you speak as if you valued that privilege, my young friend," said Mr. Jerningham, with more warmth than was usual to him.

"I do indeed prize it more highly than anything on earth," answered the young man; and as he said this, his face flushed crimson to the roots of his hair.

"Why the deuce does he blush like a girl when I say something commonly civil to him?" thought Mr. Jerningham.

"You speak as if you knew M. de Bergerac," said the student presently.

"I do know him. He is the best friend I have in the world."

"Ah, then, I believe I have the pleasure of speaking to Mr. Jerningham, the owner of this place?"

"You do enjoy that supreme bliss; I am Mr. Jerningham; and now, as you have guessed my name, perhaps you will tell me yours."

"My name is Eustace Thorburn."

"And why the deuce does he blush like a girl when he tells me his name?" thought Mr. Jerningham, taking note of a second crimson flush that came and went upon the brow and cheek of the student.

"And my good friend is well and happy?" he asked presently.

"Very well, very cheerful. Shall I hurry back to the Grange, and tell him you have arrived, Mr. Jerningham? I have heard him speak of you so much, and I know what a pleasure it will be to him to hear of your coming."

"And it will be a pleasure to me to announce it with my own lips. You must not come between me and my pleasures, Mr.—Mr. Thorburn; they are very few."

"Believe me, I should be sorry to do so," replied Eustace, as the two men bowed and parted; Mr. Jerningham to walk on towards the house, Eustace to resume his lonely ramble.

"You would be sorry? Not you!" mused the owner of Greenlands, as he walked slowly along the pathway that was so thickly strewn with dead leaves. "What does youth care how it tramples on the hopes of the old? When I refused the young bride my father and mother had chosen for me, and the alliance that had been the fairest dream they had woven for my future, what heed had I for the bitterness of their disappointment? The girl was pretty, and true and innocent, the daughter of a nobler house than mine, and the beloved of my kindred; but she was not—. Well; she was not *Ægeria*; she was not the mystic nymph of an enchanted grot; she was only an amiable young lady whom I had known from childhood, and about whom some mischievous demon had whispered into my ear the hateful fact that she was intended for me. I met my *Ægeria* after; and what came of it? Ah, me, that our brightest dreams must end so coldly! Numa's nymph came to him only in the evening; and perhaps there are few men who could retain the fervour of their devotion for an *Ægeria* of all day long, and to-morrow, and the day after, and the day after that again. And then your mortal *Ægeria* has such a capacity for tears. A cold look, a hasty word, an accidental reference to the past, a hint

of the uncertainty of the future—and the nymph is transformed into a waterfall. It is the fable of Hippocrene over again; but the fount is not so revivifying as that classic spring."

From thinking of his own past Mr. Jerningham fell to musing upon Eustace Thorburn's future.

"He has that which all the lands of the Jerninghams could not buy for me, were I free to barter them," he said to himself bitterly: "youth and hope, youth and hope! Will he waste both treasures as I wasted them, I wonder? I think not. He has a thoughtfulness and gravity of expression that promise well for his future. And how his face brightens when he smiles! Was I ever so handsome as that, I wonder, in the days when the world called me—dangerous? No, never! At its best, my face wanted the earnestness that is the highest charm of his. Why do I compare myself with him? Because I have ended life just as he is beginning it, I suppose. The Alpha and the Omega meet, and Omega is jealous of his fair young rival. How little the landscape has changed since I was like that youngster yonder, newly returned from Oxford, with my head crammed with the big talk of Greek orators and the teaching of Greek sophists, eager to exhaust the delights of the universe in the shortest period possible; eager to gather all the flowers of youth and manhood, so as to leave the great Sahara of middle age without a blossom! And the flowers have been gathered and have faded, and have been thrown away, and the great Sahara remains entirely barren. No, not entirely; there is at least one solitary leaflet,—one poor little pale blossom,—my friendship for De Bergerac."

Musing thus, the owner of Greenlands turned aside from that solemn avenue, at the end of which there frowned upon him the noble red-brick dwelling-house of England's Augustine era. He had no desire to reënter that stately abode, where the plump goddesses and nymphs of Kneller disported themselves upon the domed ceilings, and where the twelve Cæsars in black marble scowled upon him from their niches in the circular entrance-hall. Solomon himself could have been no more weary of the vineyards he had planted—and vines of one's own planting are at best but poor creatures—than was Mr. Jerningham of Sir Godfrey's nymphs and the scowling Cæsars.

"And Cleopatra once tolerated one of *ces messieurs*," he had said to himself sometimes, as he looked round the grand gloomy chamber. "Cleopatra, the *espiègle*, the despotic, the Semiramis of Egypt, the Mary Stuart of the Nile, the Ninon of the ancient world."

Between the great avenue and the Queen-Anne mansion there stretched the stiff walks of an Italian garden, and across this Mr. Jerningham went to a gate which opened into the woodiest part of the park. A narrow path across this woody region brought him to the boundary of M. de Bergerac's territory, protected by a six-foot holly hedge, more formidable than any wall ever fashioned by mortal builder.

A gate cut in this hedge opened into the quaint old flower-garden, and through this gate Mr. Jerningham went to visit his friend, after having passed unknown and unnoticed beneath the shadow of the house in which he had been born.

"'Tis sweet to hear the watchdog's honest bark bay deep-mouthed welcome—as we draw near home,'" Mr. Jerningham said to himself; "but it is not quite so sweet when the watchdog rushes out of his kennel possessed with an evident thirst for one's blood, as that old mastiff yonder rushed at me just now. Every traveller is not a Belisarius. Ah, here we are! there is the pretty old-fashioned lawn, with its flower-beds and evergreens, and there the low rambling cottage in which Jack Fermor, the bailiff, used to live when I was a boy. I remember going to him one summer morning to get my fishing-tackle mended, when I was a lad at Eton. Yes, this looks like a home! Dear old Theodore! I shall be content if he is only half as glad to see me as I shall be to see him."

The returning traveller found the door under the thatched porch open to receive him. In the heart of Greenlands Park no one ever thought of shutting a door. But the inmates of the Grange were not without their guardians. An enormous black dog sprang forth to meet the stranger as he approached the threshold, formidable as the dragon whose fiery eyes glared upon the luckless companions of Cadmus.

Happily for Mr. Jerningham the faithful animal was under admirable control. After giving utterance to one low growl that sounded a warning rather than a threat, he surveyed the intruder with a critical eye, and sniffed at him with a suspicious sniff; and then, being satisfied that the master of Greenlands was not a member of the dangerous classes, he drew politely aside and permitted the visitor to enter.

The door of the drawing-room was wide open, and a cheerful fire burning in the low grate lighted the pleasant picture of a young lady seated at a table reading, with books and writing materials scattered about her.

It was nine years since Harold Jerningham had seen his friend, and it was rather difficult for him to realise the fact that this young lady could by any possibility be the same individual he remembered in the shape of a pretty, fair-haired child, roaming about the gardens with an ugly mongrel-puppy in her arms, and to whom he had promised the finest dog that Newfoundland could produce.

He had remembered his promise, though he had forgotten the fair young damsel to whom the pledge was given. Hephæstus was the animal imported at the command of Mr. Jerningham. He had been brought to Greenlands a puppy, with big clumsy head and paws, and an all-pervading sleepiness of aspect, and he had flourished and waxed strong under the loving care of Helen, who was fondly attached to him.

The visitor's light footstep scarcely sounded on the carpeted floor,

but a warning "yap" from Hephæstus proclaimed the advent of a stranger. Helen rose to receive her father's guest, and welcomed him with a smile and a blush.

"How these Berkshire people blush!" thought Mr. Jerningham; "it is the veritable Arcadia. The inhabitants of Ardennes were not more primitive. Indeed, Rosalind was the most *rusée* of coquettes compared to this young lady."

"What a delightful surprise, Mr. Jerningham!" said Helen with a frank smile; "papa will be so pleased to see you."

"Then you remember me, Mademoiselle de Bergerac, after so long an interval—an interval that has changed you so much that I could scarcely believe my little playfellow of the garden had grown into this tall young lady?"

"O, yes, indeed; I remember you perfectly. The time has changed you very little. And I should have been most ungrateful if I had forgotten you after your kindness."

"My kindness—?"

"In sending me Hephæstus—the Newfoundland puppy, you know. Papa christened him Hephæstus on account of his blackness. He has grown such a noble, faithful creature, and we all love him so dearly."

"You all love him? Has your dog so many friends as that—emphatic 'all' implies?" asked Mr. Jerningham, wonderingly.

"I mean myself and papa, and papa's secretary Mr. Thorburn."

The girl stopped suddenly, and this time it was a very vivid blush which dyed her fair young face, for it seemed to her that the eyes of her father's friend were fixed upon her with a pitiless scrutiny.

"O, now," thought the master of Greenlands, "I begin to understand why that young man blushed when he spoke of the privilege involved in his position here."

He glanced at the open book which lay under Mademoiselle de Bergerac's hand, and was surprised to perceive that it was a duplicate of the volume he had seen in the hands of the student in the park.

"You read Greek, Mademoiselle de Bergerac?"

"Yes, papa taught me a little Greek ever so long ago. Will you not call me Helen, please? I should like it so much better."

"I shall be much honoured if you will permit me to do so. And you are reading Plato, I see. Is he not rather a difficult author for a young student in Greek?"

"Yes, he seems rather difficult, but I get a great deal of help. I am reading the *Phædo* with Mr. Thorburn, who is working very hard at the classics. I believe he means to try for his degree by and by when he leaves papa. He has a German degree already, but he seems to think that worth very little. I think he is rather ambitious."

"He seems to be altogether a wonderful person, this Mr. Thorburn."

"Yes, he is very clever—at least papa says so, and you know papa

is very well able to form a judgment on that point. And papa likes him excessively."

"Indeed! and has he been long established here—domiciled with you, in his post of secretary?"

"He has been with us nearly six months."

"May I ask where your father picked him up—by whose recommendation he came here?"

"It was Mr. Desmond who introduced him to papa,—Mr. Desmond, the editor of the *Pallas*."

"Ah! that Mr. Desmond has a knack of obliging one."

"Papa has considered himself very fortunate in finding any one able to take the warm interest which Mr. Thorburn takes in his book. It is rather dry work, you know, Mr. Jerningham, verifying quotations in half a dozen languages, and hunting out dates, and names, and all those petty details which used to absorb so much of papa's time when he was without a secretary. Do you know that Mr. Thorburn has often travelled to London and back in the same day, in order to consult some book or manuscript in the British Museum, and he has taught himself Sanscrit since he has been with us, in the hope of making himself still more useful to papa."

The young lady's face glowed with enthusiasm as she said this. To do service for her father was to win the highest claim upon her gratitude. Mr. Jerningham looked at her with a half smile of amusement, which was not without some shade of bitterness.

"I have no doubt Mr. Thorburn is an inestimable treasure," he said coldly. "I know a little humpbacked German who is a perfect prodigy of learning—a man who is master of all the dialects of India, and has the *Rāmāyana* at his fingers' ends. I am sure he would have been very glad to perform Mr. Thorburn's duties for half the money my friend gives that ambitious young student; but my German is a perfect Quasimodo in the matter of ugliness, and your papa might object to that."

"I will run to tell papa that you have arrived," said Helen. "I know what real pleasure the news will give him."

She left the room, and Mr. Jerningham remained for some minutes standing by the table with the volume of Platonic dialogues open in his hand, in the very attitude in which she had left him, profoundly meditative of aspect.

"How lovely she is!" he said to himself. "Has this Berkshire air the property of making youth beautiful? That young Thorburn is a model for a Greek sculptor, and she—she is as lovely as Phryné, when Praxiteles saw her returning from her sea-bath. And Mademoiselle and the secretary are in love with each other. I arrive, like the *seigneur du village* in a French operetta, just in time to assist in a little Arcadian romance. I wonder that De Bergerac should be so absurdly imprudent as to admit this man into his household. He is, no doubt, a nameless

adventurer, with nothing but his good looks and some amount of education to recommend him. And he, perhaps, labours under the delusion that our dear recluse is rich. I will take the opportunity of talking to him to-morrow, and opening his eyes on that point. And I must take Theodore to task for his folly. He is as proud as Lucifer, after his own fashion, and would be the last of men to sanction the alliance of his only child with an English adventurer."

It seemed as if Mr. Jerningham took somewhat kindly to his part of *seigneur du village*, and was by no means inclined to the policy of non-intervention in the affairs of these two young people. It may be that, having so long been an actor in the great drama of human passion, he could not resign himself all at once to the passive share of the spectator, who applauds and delights in the youth and beauty, the joy and the hope in which he has no longer an active interest. He knew that it was time for him to fall back into the ranks and see a new hero lead the great procession; but he could not retire with the perfect grace of a man who has played his part, and is content to know that the part has been well played, and has come to a decent finish. The art of growing old is the one accomplishment which the *beau garçon* never acquires.

For his own part, Harold Jerningham believed that he had retired with a very decent grace from that field in which his victories had been so many. Prone though he was to anatomise the follies of himself and other men, he had not learned the mystery of that vague sentiment of bitterness and disappointment which had tinged his mind during the later years of his life.

He had taken existence lightly, and had taught himself to believe that the ills of life which press most heavily on other men had left him unscathed; but there were times in which the tide that carried him along so pleasantly seemed all at once to come to a dead stop. The rapid river was transformed into a dreary patch of stagnant water, black with foul weeds, and poisonous with fatal miasmas; and Mr Jerningham was compelled to acknowledge that no man, of his own election, can resign his share in the sorrows of humanity.

He told himself very often that he had done with emotion, and that life henceforth must be for him an affair of sensation only; his peace of mind depended on the perfect adjustment of his *ménage* when he was at home, and on the tact of his courier when he travelled. But there were moments in which the subtle voice of his conscience whispered that this was only one more among the many delusions of his life. Thus, when circumstances transpired to prove that his young wife's heart had been given to another, even while her honour was yet unsullied, he had arranged an immediate separation, with the nonchalance of a man who settles the most trivial affair in the business of life, fancying that he should escape thereby all those slow agonies and *bitter throes* that are wont to rack the breasts of men who find them-

selves compelled to part from their wives. But in this, as in all other transactions of his existence, he had been the dupe of his own selfish philosophy. The sting of his wife's ingratitude was none the less keen because he thrust her from him with a careless hand. The sense of his own desolation was none the less intense because he had not suffered himself to love the woman to whom he had given his name. Even considered from a selfish man's point of view, his Horatian philosophy of indifference had been a failure. The fact that it had been so, and that he might have lived a better life for himself in living a little for other people, was just beginning to dawn upon him.

One pure pleasure he was to taste on this day—the pleasure that springs from real friendship. That one unselfish impulse which had prompted him to provide a pleasant home for an old friend won him an ample return. Theodore de Bergerac's welcome touched him to the heart. It was so warm, so real, so different from the polished flatteries he had been of late accustomed to receive with a conventional smile upon his lips and the bitterness of unspeakable scorn in his heart. To this man, so courted, so flattered, it was a new thing to know himself honestly loved.

De Bergerac was delighted by his friend's return.

"I thought we were never to see you again, Jerningham," he said, after the first welcomes had been spoken, the first inquiries made, "and this little girl here has been so anxious to behold her benefactor. I think she is more grateful to you for her big black dog than for the home that has sheltered her since her birth."

And hereupon Helen blushed, and looked shyly downward to her friend and worshipper, the Newfoundland. Mr. Jerningham began to think that those maidenly blushes which he had observed while talking to the young lady of her father's secretary were only the result of a certain youthful bashfulness, very charming in a pretty girl, rather than an indication of that tender secret which he had at first suspected.

Helen looked first at the dog and then at her father, just a little reproachfully.

"As if I could ever be sufficiently grateful for my home, papa!" she said; and then raising those deep innocent blue eyes to the visitor's face, she added, gently, "You can never imagine how papa and I love Greenlands, Mr. Jerningham, or how grateful we are to you for our beautiful home. I think it is the loveliest place in the whole world."

"And from such a traveller that opinion should stand for something," added her father, laughing at the girl's enthusiasm.

"I am almost inclined to agree with Miss de Bergerac—with Helen, since she has given me permission to call her Helen," said Harold, with some slight significance of tone; "I am inclined to think Greenlands the loveliest place in the world."

"*And yet you so rarely come to it, Mr. Jerningham,*" cried Helen.

"I did not know the power of its charm until to-day. A returning wanderer is very sensitive to such impressions you see, Helen."

"Yes, I can fancy that. But you have been in very beautiful places. You wrote to papa from Switzerland last year. Ah, how I envied you then!"

"Indeed! you wish to see Switzerland?"

"O, yes. Switzerland and Italy are just the two countries that I do really languish to behold; the first for its beauty, the second for its associations."

"Your father must contrive to take you to both countries."

"I think he would do so, perhaps, if it were not for his book. I could not be so selfish as to take him away from that."

"But the book is near completion, is it not, De Bergerac?"

The student shook his head rather despondently.

"It is a subject that grows upon one," he said doubtfully; "my material is all prepared, and the extent of it is something enormous. I find the work of classification very laborious. Indeed, there have been times when I should have wellnigh abandoned myself to despair if it had not been for my young coadjutor."

"Ah, yes; your secretary, the young fellow I met in the park—something of a pedant and prig, is he not?"

"Not the least in the world. He is a born poet."

"Indeed!" cried Mr. Jerningham, with a sneer; "your pedant is a nuisance, and your prig is a bore; but of all the insufferable creatures in this world your born poet is the worst."

"I don't think you will dislike Eustace Thorburn when you come to know him," answered De Bergerac; "and I shall be very glad if you can interest yourself in his career. He is highly gifted, and I believe quite friendless."

Mr. Jerningham looked at Helen, curious to see how she was affected by this conversation; but this time her face betrayed no emotion, and in the next minute she quickly left the room, "on hospitable thoughts intent," and eager to hold counsel with the powers of the household. Mr. Jerningham would in all probability dine at the cottage, and weighty questions, involving a choice of fish and poultry, for the time banished all other thoughts from the young lady's mind.

"Let me congratulate you upon being the father of that lovely girl," said Harold, when she was gone.

"Yes, I suppose she is very pretty. Like a Madonna, by Raphael, is she not? the *belle jardinière*, or the *Madone de la chaise*. And she is as good as she is beautiful. Yes, I thank God for having given me that dear child. Without her I should be only a bookish abstraction; with her I am a happy man."

"Unluckily for you, the day must come when she will make the happiness of some other man."

unluckily? I do not suppose my daughter's husband will corner by his fireside."

depends upon the kind of man he may be."

ould scarcely choose the kind of man who would deny her
t to take his place in her home; not as a dependant, but in
ontinental fashion, as a member of the household, with a
all its responsibilities."

ill perhaps arrange your daughter's marriage in the con-
dion, and choose her husband for her when the fitting time

means. I have scarcely ever contemplated the question.
ld is all in all to me; and it is just possible I may be a little
e man who shall divide her heart with me. But I will not
the ways of Providence in so solemn a question as her
She shall marry the man of her choice, be he rich or poor,
ple."

she should make a foolish choice?"

ll not make a foolish choice. She is the child of my own
d I will answer for her wisdom. She will be the dupe of
, the victim of no artifice. She will never mistake *clinquant*

re very bold, my dear De Bergerac. Certainly the young
he first remove from an angel; and I suppose the angels
s clearly. And now let us talk about your secretary. How
him up?"

s recommended to me by Mr. Desmond, of the *Pallas*. I
now Mr. Desmond?" added the simple scholar, who lived
those regions in which the Platonic attachment of the
editor was current gossip.

aid Mr. Jerningham briefly, "I know him. And he recom-
s young man — Thorburn? And now you must not be
ne if I seem impertinent. Do you think it was quite wise
s protégé of Mr. Desmond's to such very intimate associa-
ur household?"

ot?"

se you happened to forget that you have a daughter?"

de Bergerac flushed crimson to the temples.

imagine that this young man would repay my confidence
stine courtship of my daughter, or that my daughter
e his addresses?" he cried indignantly.

r De Bergerac, far be it from me to imagine anything. I
suggest that it is rather foolish to bring a handsome young
taste for poetry and a love for learning, and a very lovely
or less affected by the same tastes, into such intimate
unless you wish them to fall in love with each other."

daresay you are right; I daresay I have acted foolishly;

replied the student thoughtfully. "But I really never looked at the affair in that light; and then I have such perfect confidence in Helen's purity of mind, and in the soundness of her judgment. I am so fully assured that no such thing as secrecy could ever exist where she is concerned. And then again, as for this young Thorburn, I have watched him closely, and I believe him to be all that is honourable and excellent."

"You have not watched him with the eyes of worldly experience."

"Perhaps not; but I fancy there is an inner light better than a worldly man's wisdom. I would pledge myself for that young man's honour and honesty."

"The fact that he is such a paragon will not prevent your daughter from falling in love with him."

"No; it is just possible that she might become attached to him. I know she likes and admires him; but I fancy she only does so on account of his usefulness to me. However, the danger is incurred. I cannot dismiss a faithful coadjutor hurriedly or abruptly; and I am really very much interested in Eustace Thorburn. I believe there is the fire of real genius in all he does; and to my mind real genius must secure ultimate success."

"Surely Chatterton's was genius?"

"Undoubtedly; and Chatterton must have succeeded if he had been patient; but genius without patience is the flame without the oil. I believe there is a bright career before Eustace Thorburn; and if I knew that my daughter and he loved each other, earnestly and truly, I would not be the man to stand between them, and say, 'It shall not be.'"

"How much do you know of Mr. Thorburn's antecedents?"

"Not very much. I know that he was educated at a great public school in Belgium, and for the last few years was a tutor in the same school. His mother seems to have been a widow from an early period. She died a few weeks before he came to me. He speaks of her very rarely, but with extreme tenderness. Of his father he never speaks."

"He has no doubt excellent reasons for such reticence. In plain English, my dear De Bergerac, I take it that your young favourite ~~is~~ an adventurer."

"He is an adventurer who has earned his bread by the exercise of his intellect since he was seventeen years of age," answered De Bergerac. "I have seen his testimonials, signed by the powers of the Parthenon at Villebrumesc, and I need no man's attestation of his honour and honesty. You are prejudiced against him, my dear Harold."

"I am prejudiced against all the world except you, Theodore," replied the master of Greenlands, with some touch of feeling.

There was a certain amount of truth in this sweeping assertion. This man, to whom fortune had been so liberal, had of late abandoned himself to a spirit of bitterness that involved all men and all

things. But of all things hateful to this weary sybarite, the most hateful was the insolence of youth and hope, the glory of that morning sunshine which must shine on him no more. It may be that in his jaundiced eyes Eustace had seemed to wear his bright young manhood with a certain air of insolence, to blazon the freshness and sunlight of life's morning before the jaded traveller hastening down the westward-sloping hill that leads to the realms of night. However this was, Mr. Jerningham was evidently disposed to be captious and argumentative on the subject of his friend's secretary. Theodore de Bergerac, perceiving this, contrived to change the drift of the conversation. He talked of his book; and Mr. Jerningham, who was faintly interested in all literary questions, expressed a really warm interest in this one labour. He talked of old acquaintances, old associations; and the smile of the wanderer brightened with unwonted animation.

It was four o'clock when dinner was announced. The two men had been talking so pleasantly, that it was only by the deepening of the afternoon shadows they knew the progress of time. The little dining-room was bright with the light of moderator-lamps on table and sideboard when Mr. Jerningham and his host entered.

Helen stood waiting for them in the soft lamplight, with Eustace Thorburn by her side.

"Neither Mr. Thorburn nor I would come into the drawing-room to disturb your talk, papa," she said. "He has been giving me my Greek lesson by the fire in here, while Sarah laid the cloth. You should see how she stares when we come to the sonorous words. I am sure she thinks we are a little out of our minds. You are to sit opposite papa, if you please, Mr. Jerningham. I hope you won't dislike dining at this early hour. We generally dine at three; and a really late dinner would have frightened our poor little cook."

"My dear Helen, I have eaten nothing to-day, and I am as hungry as a hunter. If you are going to make excuses, it must be for not having given us our dinner at three. How pretty your table looks with that old Indian bowl of cream-coloured china asters and scarlet geraniums!"

"They are from one of the greenhouses at the great house. The gardeners are very good to me, and allow me as many flowers as I like, when our own dear little garden is exhausted."

"They should be no gardeners of mine if they were otherwise than good to you.—How do you do, once more, Mr. Thorburn?" added the master of Greenlands, looking across the table at the secretary, who had quietly seated himself in his accustomed place. "I did not think we should dine together when I came upon you this morning in the park."

This was an extreme concession on the part of Mr. Jerningham. As the two men faced each other in the lamplight, Theodore de Bergerac looked at them with an expression of surprise.

"Did nothing strike you this morning, Jerningham, when you first saw Mr. Thorburn?" he asked, smiling.

"A great many things struck me. But what especial thing should have struck me, that you know of, my dear De Bergerac?"

"The likeness of your own youth. It really seems to me that there is something of a resemblance between you and Thorburn."

"I did not perceive it," said Mr. Jerningham, with a coolness of tone that was not flattering to the younger man.

"Nor did I," added the secretary promptly.

This was a kind of preliminary passage at arms between the two men, who seemed foredoomed to be enemies in the great conflict of life.

"Well, I suppose everyone sees these things with a different eye," said De Bergerac; "but really I fancy there is some likeness between you two."

CHAPTER XVI.

MISS ST. ALBANS BREAKS HER ENGAGEMENT.

AMID the many distractions of an editorial life, Mr. Desmond contrived to remember the promise made to his old tutor. He proved the warmth of his interest in Miss Alford's dramatic career by an immediate appeal to the genial manager of the Theatre Royal Pall-Mall, and received in reply Mr. Hartstone's assurance that the first vacancy in the young-lady department should be placed at Miss St. Albans' disposal.

"Bovisbrook has just sent me a charming little adaptation of *Côtelettes sautées chez Vefour*," wrote Mr. Hartstone in conclusion; "and as I find there are six young ladies in the caste—*ces dames* of the Quartier Breda, I believe, in the original, but very cleverly transmogrified by Bovisbrook into schoolgirls from a Peckham academy who go to dine with an old West-Indian uncle at Verey's—I think I could manage to find an engagement for Miss St. Albans as early as March, when my Christmas burlesque will have had its run."

"As early as March!" said Mr. Desmond as he read this letter; "and what is to become of that poor stage-struck little girl between this and March? Well, I suppose she can go back to Market Deeping, and shine as Pauline and Juliet, until the *côtelettes sautées* piece is produced."

Having received a favourable reply from the lessee of the Pall-Mall, Mr. Desmond's next duty was to communicate its contents to the expectant father and daughter. At first he thought of enclosing Hartstone's friendly epistle with a few lines from himself; but on reflection he decided against this plan of action.

"Lucy might form exaggerated expectations from Hartstone's letter," he said to himself. "I think I had better see her."

There were no parties in Mr. Desmond's world just now. Every

one worthy of a fashionable editor's consideration was out of town, and the gentleman had his evenings to himself. It was over his solitary dinner-table that Mr. Desmond arrived at this conclusion; and it was to the Oxford-road Theatre that he bent his steps after dinner, knowing that he was there most likely to find Lucy Alford.

The play was *The Stranger*. He went into the dingy dress-circle for half an hour, and saw Mrs. Haller play her penitent scene with the Countess. Miss St. Albans looked very pretty as she grovelled at the feet of her kindly patroness, dressed in white muslin which was in the last stage of limpness, and with a penitential white-lace cap upon her girlish head. He waited patiently through the rest of the play, and went to the greenroom after the last dismal scene, impressed with the conviction that Lucy Alford was one of the dearest and prettiest of girls, but not yet on the high road to becoming a Siddons.

He found poor little Mrs. Haller alone in the greenroom with a book in her hand, and with a very plaintive expression of countenance. She brightened a little on recognising the visitor; but while shaking hands with her, Mr. Desmond perceived that her eyes were red, as with much weeping.

"I did not think you felt the character so deeply," he said; "those real tears are a very good sign for a young actress."

Lucy shook her head despondently.

"It isn't that," she said; "I-I-was c-c-crying bec-c-cause I am n-not to play J-J-J-Julia!"

Hereupon she fairly broke down and sobbed aloud, to the consternation of Mr. Desmond, who did not know how to console this poor weeping maiden. The sight of a woman's tears was always very painful to him; and for this young childlike creature he felt a pity that was especially tender.

"My dear little girl," he said, "pray don't cry. Tell me all about this business. Who is Julia?—what is Julia?—and why are you not to play Julia?"

"It's Julia in the *Hunchback*—Sheridan Knowles's *Hunchback*, you know," replied Miss St. Albans, conquering her emotion with a stupendous effort, and telling her story with a most piteous air. "I was looking forward so to playing that very part. I played Julia at Market Deeping, you know, and the *Deeping Advertiser* said the kindest things about me,—that I reminded him of Miss O'Neil—though I can't exactly imagine how the critic on the *Advertiser* could remember Miss O'Neil's acting, as he is not yet nineteen years of age. And I have such pretty dresses for Julia—a silver-gray silk that was poor mamma's wedding-dress, and is not so *very* scanty, as I wear it looped up over a white muslin petticoat, in the King-Charles style, you know. And just when I was so pleased at the idea that the piece was going to be done, Mr. de Mortemar came to me and told me, quite cruelly, that I am not to play Julia. And there is a young lady coming to play the

part—at least, she is not very young—an amateur lady, who comes in a brougham with two horses, and whose dresses, they say, cost hundreds of pounds.”

“An amateur lady! That is rather curious. And why does Mr. de Mortemar wish that she should play Julia?”

“Mr. Johnson says she will pay him a great deal of money for the privilege. The houses have been, O, so bad, and Mr. de Mortemar is very angry to find he doesn’t draw. He says there’s a cabal against him.”

“Indeed! And this amateur lady comes to his relief with her dresses that cost hundreds of pounds! I should have thought that an amateur lady who keeps her brougham and pair would scarcely care to make her *début* at the Oxford-road Theatre. Have you seen this lady?”

“Yes. She has been to rehearsal; and she has been here in the evening to see the call for the next day. I daresay she will come this evening. She is very haughty, and takes no more notice of me than if I were the ground under her feet; and O, you should see the heels of her boots!”

“She must be a vulgar, presuming person, in spite of her boots and her brougham. But if I were you, I would not trouble myself at all about her or the character she is to play. It will only be one leaf stolen from your laurels.”

He said this with a smile in which there was some shade of sadness. There was something very sad to his eyes in the spectacle of this girlish struggler in the great battle of life, and in the thought of that frail foundation whereon her hopes rested.

“She never can be a great actress, with such poor opportunities as she can have,” he said to himself; “and she will go on from year to year hoping against hope, patiently enduring the same drudgery, living down perpetual disappointments, until some day, when she is sixty years of age, she will break her heart all at once because some petty provincial manager refuses her the *rôle* of Juliet, after she has played it for forty years, like the actress of the old story. Poor little Lucy! She is not the kind of woman before whose indomitable courage all obstacles succumb. She was made to be happy in a bright home.”

“Hark!” cried the young lady of whom he was thinking, “there is Miss Ida Courtenay talking to Mr. de Mortemar.”

“Miss Ida Courtenay?”

“Yes, the amateur lady who is to play Julia.”

“O, indeed! her name is Ida Courtenay; and she comes to the theatre in her brougham, and wears unimaginable heels to her boots. I think a Cuvier of social science might describe the species of the lady from those particulars.”

Lucy only stared on hearing this remark, which was not intended for her comprehension.

“At eleven!” cried a loud coarse voice without; “quite impossible.

I shall be engaged till one. You must call the *Hunchback* at half-past one."

"It will be rather inconvenient," murmured the brilliant De Mortemar, in a respectful, nay even obsequious tone of voice.

"O, bother your inconvenience! The piece must be rehearsed at half-past one or not at all, as far as I am concerned. I don't want a rehearsal. It's for your people the rehearsal is wanted. I'm sure your Helen is such an abominable stick that I expect to be cut up in my scenes with her, if I don't take care."

"O!" cried Miss Alford, with a little gasp.

"Who is the lady that plays Helen so badly?" asked Mr. Desmond.

"It's—it's I who am to play Helen," exclaimed poor Lucy. "Isn't it shameful of her to say that? I was letter-perfect yesterday when we rehearsed; I was indeed, Mr. Desmond. And Miss Courtenay read her part all through the piece. And now she says—O, it's really too bad—"

A mighty rushing sound, as of a Niagara of moire antique, heralded the approach of the lady in question, who bounced into the greenroom, and swept past Mr. Desmond with the air of a Semiramis in high-heeled boots. She was a tall stalwart personage of about thirty-five years of age, and she was as handsome as rouge, pearl-powder, painted lips, painted nostrils, painted eyelids, painted eyebrows, and a liberal supply of false hair, could make her. The share that nature had in her beauty was limited to a pair of fierce black eyes, which might have been sufficiently large and lustrous without the aid of Indian ink or belladonna; and the outline of a figure which the masculine critic usually denominates "fine." Mauve moire antique, a white-lace burnous, and a bonnet from the Burlington Arcade, did the rest; and the general result was a very resplendent creature of a type which has become too familiar to the eyes of English citizens and citizenesses in this latter half of the nineteenth century.

Towards this lady Mr. de Mortemar's manner exhibited a deference which was somewhat surprising, and not a little displeasing, to the editor of the *Pallas*.

"Good evening, sir," said the provincial Roscius, on perceiving Lawrence. "I am gratified to find you again a witness of our performance. You will have observed a wide difference of style between my Claude and my Stranger. Those two characters mark, if I may be permitted the expression, the opposite poles of my dramatic sphere. Claude, the lover, belongs to my torrid zone; Steinforth, the outraged husband, locked in the icy armour of his pride, snow-bound, as I may say, by the bitter drift of woe, is my polar region. I venture to hope that you were struck by the different phases of passion in my silent recognition of Mrs. Haller. My provincial critics have been good enough to assure me that the whole gamut of emotional feeling is run by me in that situation."

"I fear that I am scarcely qualified to form a judgment upon your

acting, Mr. de Mortemar," the editor replied very coldly; "I was not very attentive to the performance this evening. I came to the theatre only to see Miss Al—Miss St. Albans—whose father is one of my earliest friends. I am sorry to find that she has reason to consider herself somewhat ill-used by your stage-manager in the matter of a certain caste of the *Hunchback*."

The attention of Miss Ida Courtenay had, until this moment, been occupied by some official documents stuck against a little board upon the mantelpiece; but on hearing these words pronounced in a very audible manner by Mr. Desmond, she turned abruptly and glared at that gentleman with all the ferocity of which her fine eyes were capable. She lived among people with whom this kind of glare generally proved effective, and she expected to subjugate Mr. Desmond as easily as it was her wont to subjugate the weak-minded individuals with whom she consorted.

She found, to her mortification, that in this case she had glared in vain. The editor of the *Pallas* did not flinch before the angry glances of this Semiramis of Lodge-road, but calmly awaited Mr. de Mortemar's explanation.

"I am my own stage-manager," replied that gentleman, with offended majesty; "and I have yet to learn by what right Miss St. Albans considers herself ill-treated in this theatre. This is not the return which I expected from a young lady for whom my influence alone could have secured a hearing from a London audience."

"Pray do not let us have any high-flown talk of that kind, Mr. de Mortemar," said Lawrence, with some slight impatience of tone. "I am quite sure that you would not have engaged Miss St. Albans if it had not suited you to do so. I believe you engaged her for what is technically called leading business—the whole of the leading business."

"There was no written engagement. I offered to engage Miss St. Albans, and she was only too glad to accept my offer. Until this time she has played the complete range of leading characters."

"Indeed. Then, as there is no formal engagement, and as you have found a lady who wishes to supersede Miss St. Albans, I suppose there can be no objection to this young lady's withdrawal from your company."

Lucy looked terribly alarmed by this speech.

"I—I wouldn't inconvenience Mr. de Mortemar for the world," she faltered; but Lawrence would not allow her to say more.

"You must let me act for you in this matter, Miss Alford," he said. "As I am your father's friend, and as I am rather more experienced in theatrical matters than he is, I shall venture to take this affair into my own hands. You may consider yourself free to cast your pieces without reference to this young lady, Mr. de Mortemar; she will not again act in your theatre."

"But she must act in my theatre," cried the infuriated tragedian.

"Do you suppose you are to come here interfering with my arrangements, and taking away my actresses, in this manner? You ignore me in your paper, and then you come and insult me in my greenroom. Really this is a little too bad."

"I think some of your arrangements are a little too bad, Mr. de Mortemar. I will be answerable for any legal penalty you may be able to inflict upon Miss St. Albans, whose engagement I hold to be no engagement at all. For the rest, you have Miss Courtenay, who will no doubt be delighted to play a round of characters."

"O, indeed!" cried that lady, with ironical politeness; "you're monstrously wise about other people's business, upon my word, sir. But, though I've seen a good deal of cool impudence in my life, I never witnessed cooler impudence than I've seen in this room to-night. If you knew what you were talking about, you'd know that I play Julia in the *Hunchback*, and Constance in the *Love-Chase*, and play nothing else. My dresses for those two characters were made for me by Madame Carabine Nourrisson of Paris, and I should be sorry to tell you what they cost."

"I should be very sorry to hear it. I am too much of a political economist not to regret that money should be spent in that way. However, as you like the cream of the drama so much, Miss Courtenay, would it not be as well to try a little of the skim-milk? If you really want to be an actress, you cannot do better than extend your experience by some of the drudgery that Miss St. Albans has so industriously gone through."

"If I want to be an actress!" cried the outraged lady. "And pray who may have told you that I want to be an actress?"

"If that is not your design, *que diable venez-vous faire dans cette galère?*"

"I don't understand Latin, and I don't want to," replied the fair Ida, with a venomous look at Mr. Desmond; "but I beg to tell you that I am a lady of independent means, and that I act for my own amusement, and the amusement of my friends."

"I have no doubt of the latter fact," murmured Lawrence politely.

"And I have no intention whatever of sinking to a poor, weak, trodden-down drudge in limp white muslin, like some actresses I could mention."

"Indeed, Miss Courtenay! And are you aware that it is you, and ladies of your class, who bring discredit upon the profession which you condescend to take up for the amusement of your idle evenings? It is this—amateur—element which contaminates the atmosphere of our theatres, and the manager who fosters it is an enemy to the interests he is bound to protect."

"O, indeed!" exclaimed Miss Courtenay, who was very weak in a conversational tussle where neither fierce looks nor strong language were *admissible*. And then, finding herself powerless against her un-

known assailant, she turned with Medea-like ferocity upon the injured and innocent manager. "I'll tell you what it is, Mr. de Mortemar," she cried; "since you are so mean-spirited as to let me be insulted in this manner, I beg you to understand that I shall never enter your theatre again—no, Mr. de Mortemar, not if you were to go down on your knees to me. And you may find some one else to play Julia, and you may let your private boxes yourself if you can, which I know you can't; and I have the honour to wish you good evening."

Hereupon Miss Courtenay swept out of the room like an artificial whirlwind of *moire antique*. And thus it happened that at one fell swoop Mr. de Mortemar was deprived of both his heroines, much to his discomfiture, but not to his entire annihilation. The unconquerable force of conscious genius supported him in this extremity.

"I can send on my walking lady and second chambermaid for Julia and Helen," he said to himself. "After all, what does it matter how the women's parts are played? The feature of the play is my Master Walter; and I don't suppose the audience would care what sticks I put in the other characters."

This is how he consoled himself in the seclusion of his dressing-room, whither he retired after bestowing upon Mr. Desmond a scathing look, but no words of reproach. The editor of the *Pallas* was a person whom an embryo Kean could hardly afford to offend.

Some members of the company had dropped in during the foregoing little scene; a low comedian dressed "for the farce," and a damsel of the soubrette species; and Mr. Johnson, the incomprehensible, also dressed for the farce, in a red scratch-wig that in no wise resembled the natural covering of any head ever seen on human shoulders, and with a false nose of painted cotton-wool. These individuals had been evidently much pleased by the encounter between Mr. Desmond and Miss Ida Courtenay.

"You gave it her to rights," said Mr. Johnson, with friendly familiarity. "I know the lady, and the less amateurs of that kind their foot on the stage the better it will be for the stage and all who belong to it. She's a very nice lady, she is, but she's rather a bad temper. She made her first appearance in public at a pretty little theatre in Bow-street two or three months ago, and had to pay rather heavily for her *début*. You see, she went and made a morning call upon a young friend and neighbour of hers at rather an inconvenient hour, and, being of a hasty disposition, broke a few windows because she wasn't let in soon enough. I believe there was something in the way of a poker and a fire-shovel between the two young ladies; but that was never quite cleared up."

"I am sure she is an eminently respectable person, Jack Johnson," said the low comedian in the flaxen wig; "she never comes to the theatre unaccompanied by her mother; and if a maternal parent is an evidence of respectability, I don't know what is."

"Yes," muttered the incredulous Johnson, "I've seen her with at least half-a-dozen mothers in my time. It's a pity she doesn't contrive to get 'em more alike."

Lucy Alford departed to change the penitential white muslin of Mrs. Haller for the well-worn merino dress and dark shawl and bonnet in which she came to the theatre. Before doing so, she told Mr. Desmond that it was her father's habit to wait for her every evening at the close of the performance in the immediate neighbourhood of the stage-door.

"Then I will go and wait there with him," said Mr. Desmond. "I must excuse myself to him for the liberty I have taken in breaking your engagement, and explain my motive for taking that liberty. I'm sure your father will approve my reasons for acting as I did."

"I'm sure of that," answered Lucy; and then she blushed, as she added falteringly, "I scarcely think you would like to go to the place where papa waits for me; it is a kind of public-house, two doors from the theatre. The gentlemen of the company go there a good deal; and as papa finds it so very dull in the dress-circle when the play is over, he is obliged to go there."

"I am not at all afraid of going there in search of him. I shall not say good-night until I have seen you comfortably seated in your cab."

"You are very kind; but on fine nights we generally walk home. Papa likes the walk."

She blushed as she said this; and the blush smote the very heart of Laurence Desmond. It was not the first time that he had seen those fair young cheeks crimsoned by that shame of the sinless—the sense of poverty; and the thought of those trials and humiliations which this gentle, innocent, tender creature had to bear touched him deeply.

He thought of the women he met in his own world—women who would have uttered a shriek of horror at the idea of walking in the streets of London at any hour of the day, to say nothing of the night; and here was this poor child walking every night from one end of London to the other, after mental and physical fatigue which would have prostrated those other women for a week. He thought of the extravagance, the exaction, the egotism, which he had seen in the women he met in society; and he asked himself how many among the brightest and best of those he knew were as pure and true as this girl, for whom the present was so hard a slavery, the future so dark an enigma.

He left the theatre, and found that the establishment of which she had spoken as "a kind of public-house," was an actual public-house, and nothing else. He went in at that quieter and more aristocratic portal on which the mystic phrase "Jugs and Bottles" was inscribed; but even here he found a select *clientèle* engaged in the

consumption of gin-and-bitters. He inquired for Mr. St. Albans—concluding that the gentleman would be best known by his daughter's professional alias—and the old man speedily emerged from a parlour where some noisy gentlemen were playing bagatelle.

The old tutor was not a little disconcerted on beholding Laurence Desmond, and faltered a feeble apology as the two men went out into the street together.

"I am obliged to wait somewhere, you see, Desmond," he said. "I can't stand Harry Bestow in the farces; and I can't hang about the greenroom; Mortemar doesn't like it. So I take a glass of bitter ale in there. The Prince of Wales is a regular theatrical house, and one hears all sorts of news about the West-end theatres."

Mr. Desmond wondered that the bitter ale dispensed at the Prince of Wales should perfume the breath of the consumer with so powerful an odour of gin. He gave no expression to this wonder, however, but proceeded to relate what he had done in the greenroom.

"Yes, very right, very right, Desmond," said Tristram Alford rather despondently, when he had heard all. "My little Lucy ought not to act with such a woman as that; and she can go back to Market Deeping for the new year. The journey will be expensive—but—"

"You must let me arrange that little matter in my own way," Laurence said kindly. "I can promise Miss Alford an engagement at the Pall Mall in March; and in the mean time you must let me be your banker."

"My dear friend, you are too generous—you are the soul of nobility. But how can I ever repay—"

"It is I who am under obligation to you. Can I forget that if you hadn't made me work up my Thucydides to the highest point of perfection, those stony-hearted examiners would have inevitably ploughed me? And now let us go to the stage-door. Lucy—Miss Alford—must be ready by this time."

The young lady was waiting for them in the shadow of the dingy portal. The night was bright and clear, and for some little distance Mr. Desmond walked by his old tutor's side, with Lucy's little hand on his arm. He wondered to find himself walking the obscure streets, through which Mr. Alford had mapped out a short cut between the Oxford-road and Islington; he wondered still more to find Lucy's hand resting so lightly, and yet so confidently, on his coat-sleeve; and above all he wondered that it should seem so pleasant to him to be quite out of his own world.

He walked about a mile, and then hailed a passing cab, and placed the young lady by her father's side. He had made one very painful discovery during the walk, and that was the fact that Tristram Alford had been drinking, and bore upon him the stamp of habitual drunkenness. This, then, was the cause of that gradual decadence which had

ended the tutor's fortunes since the days at Henley. What a man hold the fate of a daughter in his hand! what a helpless guardian innocent girlhood! Mr. Desmond's heart ached as he thought of it.

"I may help them a little for the moment," he said to himself, but if this man is what I believe him to be, there can be no such thing as permanent help for him or for his daughter."

"I don't know how to thank you for your kindness of to-night," Lucy said, as she shook hands with the editor.

"Indeed you owe me no thanks. I only acted on the impulse of the moment. I was enraged by that woman's impertinence, and that man's sycophantic manner of treating her. Let me know if he makes any attempt to enforce your engagement. I don't think he will. When are you likely to go to Market Deeping?"

"On the thirtieth, I suppose. The theatre reopens on New-Year's day. Shall we—will papa—see you again before we go, Mr. Desmond?"

"Well, no; I fear my time—or—yes, you can breakfast with me to-morrow morning, can't you, Alford? say the morning after Christmas-day. Come to my chambers at nine, if that is not too early for you, and we will talk over Miss Alford's future."

Tristram Alford accepted this invitation with evident pleasure; but Laurence, whose hearing was very acute, heard the faintest sigh of disappointment escape the lips of Lucy, as he released her hand.

"Good-night," he said cheerily; "and all success at Market Deeping! I shall hope to see you when you come back to town for your engagement at the Pall Mall."

And so they parted—Mr. Alford and his daughter to enjoy the novel luxury of a cab ride; Laurence to walk all the way to the Albany in an unusually thoughtful mood.

A ROUND OF OPERAS

It is melancholy to think that England should be excluded from the grand cohort of composers. We look wistfully at France, literally teeming with delightful fancies and luxuriating in melodies. What a host of charming and gracious writers!—the matchless Auber, the romantic Berlioz, the graceful and piquant Victor Massé, with Thomas, and Offenbach, and a host more. The smallest little French ballad out of a French opera has a piquancy, a colour of the story, and a certain novelty quite characteristic. But the truth is, French composers seem to use music as a language; and when they write opera, the notes and phrases run off luxuriously. There is an elegant copiousness in all they write, a dainty and graceful freedom. Even where there is not depth, there is elegance and fluency, like a conversation in their own pleasant tongue. With us all is barren and hammered out. We deal in the old conventional phrases again and again repeated. To see this, we need only take up that most dreadful of performances—an English grand opera in five acts—*The Queen of Westphalia*, with its quartette or two, its grand finale à la Verdi, its scraps of Rossini, and its music-sellers' ballads.

In music what feasts, what charming gardens! each so varied, and full of charms of its own. For this is the special delight of musical taste—it should be so Catholic. It is hard to understand those rigid Puritans of harmony, who force you to take *their* Koran—a Beethoven or a Mozart—at the sword's point. We grow weary of this intolerance. All good music is welcome—the more delightful from the variety. As Lamb said, "I like everything that is book;" so we should like all that is music. There is one of whom the wise are accustomed to speak with a contemptuous depreciation, as "a clever fellow in his way"—much as a true Conservative would speak of a dangerous Radical. And yet no generous musician but will own a large debt to the truly dramatic, most melodious, and richly coloured Giuseppe Verdi. There was a time when on the *affiche* at every theatre in Europe was to be read his name. That must be the poorest "gaff" of an Opera which has not played *Il Trovatore* in some shape or other. Even the little assembly-room of Sheltie-on-the-Sea—taken by the wandering "English Opera Company" (Mr. Adam Lunger, the admired tenor, and Miss Nellie Maxwell), and converted for the night into a theatre, Mr. Crowther at the piano—has heard the *Trovatore*. By his tunes he had secured a hold upon the crowd. But yet his airs of the "Donna *à mobile*" sort, the "Libiamo" and "Ah, che la morte!" pattern are

rest claim to consideration. They have always seemed thin and though clever. His admirers, when they praise, are thinking of him as a more formal and ambitious arias, ever welcome baritone; his passionate duets between a betrayed husband and a gray Venetian father and suppliant daughter—give the true ring, a thrilling fervour and melody, a headlong and a tuneful whirl exactly reflecting the situation. This is the merit of Verdi: he imbibes the whole force of the story and the situation. Further, his music reflects the colour of the particular opera. *The Traviata*, that despised and flouted opera, which the critics have called light and feeble, has the strangest tone of levity, gaiety, and half-melancholy pervading it, pitched in a half sad key, and seems to reflect the meditated spirits of the heroine. Here, of course, we leave the theatre to sing the drinking song and the rather ordinary “*Di Provenza*,” but the taste will admire the sad introduction, the gay opening chorus with its *arrière-pensée* half romantic, half sad, the ever-welcome *libera*, and the dying scene. There are operas of his scarcely known in this country, as *Il Simon Boccanegra*, full of this tuneful and colour, but with not enough of the “jiggy,” whistlesome air which the English ear require. So with the *Due Foscari*, which has a Venetian atmosphere and an almost Greek mournfulness. And so with the delightful *Sicilienne*, and its noble quintette. But Verdi is a sumptuous and like a court beauty, he requires all the splendour of gorgeous costumes, set him off to the fullest advantage: an unbounded orchestra, a large opera-house, a spreading stage, and the fullest *tenue*. So ran the *Traviata* during the first French exhibition, when it was incomparably brought out. Latterly a great change has been noticed in this respect: he has affected a more solid manner, importing a sort of German colour into his writing—but a German element, lightened by an Italian touch, and this sort of artistic eclecticism, is one of the secrets of excellence in music. So has the French school been enriched and strengthened. By this step he has fatally compromised his English popularity. The *Ballo in Maschera*, written on this principle, finds no favour with the groundlings and organ-men, who have scarcely anything to do but to applaud or grind; and the masterly singing of his “*Eri tu*” by the beautiful and accomplished Della Sedie, and the clever quartette, has saved it. So will it be with the *Forza del Destino*, and the *Don Carlos*. Yet all these latter are full of lovely and even of fine music. What a whirl of a love-duet for tenor and soprano is found in the *Ballo*! It is in a situation like that, with a soprano equal to it, that the boundless power of music shows itself. So fine southern acting, and rilling tenor, and fervent soprano, and a fine orchestra find their greatest advantage. Here does our matter-of-fact British nature halt and hobble. No English actor could in the faintest way approach the *verve* and spirit of Verdi. Abroad, however, Verdi is still in favour; and galleries at

Rome, Florence, Bologna, Naples hear the *Simon* and the *Forza* with real delight—allowance, of course, being made for the division of sympathy which the rising of a new favourite occasions. And there is a dangerous rival in Charles Gounod.

Never were two writers so distinct; but Verdi must be placed far below Gounod, the latter aiming at a much higher and more correct standard. Both, too, have a mannerism as distinct as that of Mendelssohn, working always in the same forms and patterns. Gounod must be placed higher, on the ground of more classical and finished treatment, and appealing to higher and more exquisite passions. Gounod could not paint the tumultuous and gorgeous emotions which Verdi chooses for his stories; but it is to be very much feared that Gounod will be known too as the author of but a single opera. He is too good for the vulgar. Years and years ago, when the accomplished musical critic of the *Athenæum* was vainly striving to get a hearing for one whom he justly considered to be the foremost of living musicians, wandering one night into the French Théâtre Lyrique, the writer found the first scene of Molière's *Médecin* commencing. This had been made into an operetta; and the delicious music, matching the hue and no less delicious humour of the piece in its quaintness and fashion, its old simplicity and breadth, without at the same time a particle of the affectation which can imitate the tricks of old fashion; the sly irony and pompousness, the fun, and yet the Gluck-like stiffness,—all these made up a combination that was startling for its novelty and genius. Looking at the bills, I found it was by a tolerably obscure "Ch. Gounod," author of many operas that had failed. That delightful piece was imported recently, cut into English shape, but scarcely "did." It wanted the heaven-born French acting, the admirable getting up, and the almost perfect direction of the Lyrique. At that same theatre I came on the sixtieth or seventieth night of what?—the old "pigtail" opera of Mozart, the *Nozze de Figaro*, admired of all musicians. The house was crammed to bursting; and as it was to be the last night of staying in Paris, I was, as a matter of favour, found a seat in the top gallery, and from that high eerie heard the most delightful and incomparable performance of that gay opera that could be conceived. It was perfect. Ugalde, Saxe and the charming Carvalho; the bloom, the lightness of touch were indescribable, the relish and enjoyment of the audience as welcome. This, of course, from our volatile neighbours, as we are fond of calling them. But, from their commercial and money-getting tastes, from their engineering and building works, they seem to be growing about as solid as ourselves. That run went on for close upon a hundred nights. Later the opera was revived at one of the London theatres, and was played about three times; but no one cared for it, and, in truth, it seemed a different opera. *Sappho* and *Mirella*, Gounod's other operas, have all enjoyed only the unsatisfactory compliment of "a success of esteem," though the delicious dance-music in the first is at the very top of that richest and most

department of composition—a department the most fascinating, the high names of Meyerbeer, Auber, and Mendelssohn have led. *Mirella* failed through its story—too delicate and poetical, such of an abstraction to be clothed in the somewhat coarse of stage conventionality. It is more a poem, a dream, but with local colour, with the very scent of the vines, the hot sun of Italy, and the primitive quaintness of the peasants. This it is shows the boundless power of music, which can picture any- and convey any emotion and tone of human nature. *Faust* is the likely to be his one opera. The new *Romeo and Juliet* gives the gardens of Verona and the distinct Italian colouring, the delirium of Shakespeare's story, and all the charm and bouquet of a lightful play, but seems to be a failure. And though it may be said, with Charles Lamb, that these Shakespearian characters and stories are too celestial, too spiritual, to be vulgarised by representation or to be forced down to concrete reality, still Gounod's music, so faithful, so true, would seem to be the true medium, half celestial, half human, by which the divine Shakespeare shall be interpreted.

Who that has listened to *Faust* but has brought away a sense of awe, assisted at that awful mystery of the middle ages? The air is charged with the strange spirits of evil, with that wild mix- tured cathedral music—the rolling organ, the cries of demons, the pathos of flowers from the garden, the simple voices of German peasants. All this seems embodied in the strange weird prelude, which begins with a faint *frisson*, as it commences. Almost every bar of this wonderful opera is in keeping; over all its tenderness hangs a sense, as of coming evil and gloom. Everything is appropriate. Every- thing unconventional. He has discovered new shapes and phrases, in his narrative parts, as they may be called, where the old bald- ness would have halted on, are full of the most charming and grace and variety. His orchestration, its wit, piquancy, and force, it would be vain to praise. It is impossible to put anything like the two duets of Faust and Marguerite for originality and grace or the grace and love of the one, the gathering despair and passion of the other. The Kermesse scene, so full of variety and good classical work; the waltz, a hackneyed waltz, yet so graceful and ever welcome; the delicious waltz, wrought in a very *pâte tendre* of music, graceful as Greuze or a flower, full of the dainties fluttering; the garden scene, when the flowers open their petals, and we smell their perfume, and where the air seems to float across; the tremendous scene in the cathedral, the organ rolling afar off, and the cries of the demons mixing with the chants of the monks;—these are but a tithe of the beauties of this wonderful opera, of which it is melancholy to think not a single stave has been produced by an Englishman, or even an Italian. It is true; there is no accompaniment in the old conventional sense, the *best notes, pizzicato à la Donizetti*, and even Verdi. All is the

opera, and the leading music travels on as much in the orchestra as on the stage. It may be heard again and again, and new beauties will be always revealing themselves. The amateur, however, should keep it sacred from being "hacked" in private performances. The full *ténué* of grand performance on the stage is what it requires. Yet in this country we do not know all its beauties. There is the Walpurgis act, always given in Germany, but left out in England; and the exquisite tenor song, "Versar nel mio cor," full of beauty and passion and colour, welcome when sung tenderly by a soft feeling voice at a piano.

Welcome now to the delightful Auber, like Kitty ever fair and young, who gives us music like champagne—bright, sparkling, wholesome. He indeed stands alone. No one comes near him. Some have talked of his music as light, but it is merely the lightness which sheer grace and elegance imparts. Spirit is the great characteristic of his music; nothing flags with him. It is seen to trot gaily along the road, and his accompaniment, light as a feather, is the perfection of a companionment, and can be brought out on even a small band. There is perfect freedom and eloquence in his writing: it has the elegance of his own French comedy. His gayest airs have at times a kind plaintive tone, not a bad foil, even in the merriest music. His notes and phrases have a delightful mannerism of their own, and, above all, are clear as a bell, healthy as the open air. It is music that will never die. Military bands yet unformed shall be playing the overtures *Masaniello*, to *Fra Diavolo*, and to the ever-blooming *Diamans de Couronne*. A performance of the *Domino Noir* by Frenchmen and French women is the perfection of elegance. The story is piquant and gay, and is matched by music as piquant. What a bolero! So will *Le part de diable*. So with the thousand-and-one airs of his that drift about, whether selection played by bands, or a little air sung at the piano from *Manon Lescaut*. In the latter there is a "laughing song"—trifle, but the perfection of elegant trifling, "c'est l'histoire amoureuse." The most gratifying homage for this famous veteran and most welcome to all his admirers was to hear his gay march bearing away the palm, beyond dispute, from a laborious and tremendous business Meyerbeer; and long may he bloom and flourish!

After these giants come the rank and file. From all corners rise pleasant harmonies. The choice is almost distracting. We know them and have never explored the vast fields of music. There are Italian writers by the score, gay, brisk, and inspiring—Ricci, Petrella, Rossi, and a host more. Now and again we hear a bolero out of some of the obscure little operas played at Bologna or Vienna, and are delighted at its unbounded fancy and gaiety, and should wish heartily to know more. The *Crispino*, sung so delightfully last year, and setting heads and feet beating, shows us what a rich lode is here. We travel through Germany, and of a night look in at the little dull and rather monotonous theatre of a small town, and hear Czar and Zimmerman, the *Nachtke*

in *Granada*, and many more, all popular, and scarcely heard of by our public. We have yet to be presented to Wagner, the ultra-romantic musician, who by his own folly, his crude, raw, and terrible spasms of discordant music, has destroyed all chance of his own popularity. Yet he is a musician, original, full of a romantic and medieval passion, of new phrases, and a fervent manner quite apart.*

So with France. There flourishes Grisar with his "*Bon soir, Signor Pantalon!*" and the farcical Offenbach; Berlioz, with the tropical *Perle de Brésil*, with its pretty and languishing tenor pastoral, and his *Herculeum*, ambitious in spirit, with dainty plums scattered through it. For charming tuneful music we can hear an opera of Victor Massé; now and again can step into the Grand Opera, where one of Halévy's pompous *fastueux* operas, *La Reine de Chypre*, with its five acts of processions, finales, and choruses, moves on solemnly till midnight. At Lyons or Marseilles we hear a *réprise*, the delightful *Pré aux Clercs* of Herold, whose wonderful and dashing *Zampa* overture will be played to the crack of doom; or the *Juive*; or the charming and coquettish *Postillon de Longueueux*.

Now we see the grand and solid and yet romantic Mendelssohn abandon his severe scriptural stories and come down to the footlights. One of the gayest and most tuneful little operas, furnishing an hour's charming entertainment, is the *Son and Stranger*. There the *village* tone is perfect, and there is a little undercurrent of seriousness and solemnity quite in keeping. There is a trio admirable for spirit and dramatic effect. The whole was thrown off as a sketch; and yet how infinitely more characteristic than his ambitious fragment the grand opera *Lorelei*! As for *Elijah*, and its solemn and massive progress of three or four hours, it is fine and overwhelming; but the "shape" of oratorio is a mistake, and it is in truth but a mutilated distortion of the opera to suit particular tastes.

Now we see a cap with a gold band and a mixture of joyous peasants, a wonderful four-post bed and a water-wheel, and know the *Somnambula* (most true and delightful of all known operas)—its clear tuneful melodies and familiar music—music fresh and cool as a clear summer evening, as welcome as the breeze, and for its perfect nature and spontaneousness the very *Vicar of Wakefield* of operas. Hackneyed, it never tires; and the very sound of the first chorus makes us feel as joyous as the villagers wish us to think they are. What a richness and abundance!—no "padding" or manufacture there. Everything in it is good. So with *Norma*—bating always its inevitable "Deh conte" and "Si fine allore," the first sounds of which send one rushing

* The musical reader, who would wish to have a fair specimen of this writer, should not go to hear one of his operas, but should listen to a selection, as played by a military band; he will then wonder that such a composer should have been overlooked. Or let him send to Messrs. Ewer for the overture to *Lohengrin* arranged as a duet, or for Cramer's selection from the *Fliegende Holländer*.

from the theatre, or at least from the drawing-room. Yet for the rest, how fine, how glowing, how appropriate, down to the groves and altar and the Druids in white flannel, whom we do not at all feel inclined to laugh at! And, alas, the unapproached Grisi herself cutting the vervain. The *Puritani*, as an opera, has no special *tone*, though full of fine music; and the story is dull. Will Donizetti ever obtain all the credit he deserves? He was, musically, no one's enemy but his own. Who would suppose that the flippant trifles he "knocked off" as "pot-boilers" could come from the same soul as *Lucia*? There is a grandeur and solidity about *that* music which is surprising. The music is as sombre as the story. There is no hurry, no scrambling; everything is worked up steadily and solidly and with immense *dramatic* effect. What charming and graceful arias for the soprano! so showy and elegant—as in the air accompanied by flute—and yet so unartificial. What finales of passion and defiance! And, above all, what a field for the pathetic tenor! whose last scene in the churchyard—hackneyed as it has been—will always be welcome, and is unapproached in feeling and beauty, though the horns *will* show signs of distress in the symphony. Somehow, nothing that is now written seems to have the hold on public taste that music of *that* kind had. Rossini, and his *Barbiere*, *Tancredi*, *Gazza Ladra*, and *William Tell*, seem in the distance like recollections of great historical five-act plays—fine and flourishing, yet without much that *touches*. The singing-lesson in the *Barbiere*, with its wearisome Italian *buffo* work, which people laugh at without understanding, will intrude. The *Semiramide* is a tremendous business—cold and fatiguing. This is profane and irreverent; but we are taking the popular view. And—shall we dare to whisper it?—even the grand work, his 'immortal *chef-d'œuvre*,' as the opera programmes announce it, *Don Giovanni*, is a serious and solemn business, a study—like reading a classic. The story is cruelly against it.

More grateful and less ambitious, but absolutely perfect in its way, comes the delicately tender and melodious *Dinorah*. Absolutely redolent of French peasant-life, exquisite in tone, story, and treatment, it is like a sweet dream; it breathes the innocence, the rusticity, the amiable superstition of a pastoral district. The recovery of *Dinorah's* senses, the bewitching music that attends it, the march and village procession, go to the very heart, and make us regret wistfully that it was only at the close of his life Meyerbeer was awakening to his true vein, and was bidding adieu to his broken and rugged melodies, his tremendous fanfares, his hurricanes of *finales*.

But the list is endless. Our neighbours abound to luxuriance. They have a more genuine taste for music. They have their opera in every town, supported chiefly by the cheap galleries and pit. Has Manchester, or Glasgow, or Belfast, or even Dublin or Edinburgh an opera *en permanence*? This is a significant question when we think of contrasts.

LETTERS FROM LILLIPUT

BEING ESSAYS ON THE EXTREMELY LITTLE

BY GEORGE AUGUSTUS SALA

IV. ON PRETTY LITTLE THINGS.

THE city of Paris is all but universally considered to be a terrestrial paradise of Pretty Things. I have qualified my remark, you will observe, and said "all but universally;" for there are those who dissent from the claim which Paris puts forward for preëminence in the production of pretty things, and who hold that the famous *articles de Paris*, sparkling and delicate and ingenious as they may be, are surpassed by the trinkets and gewgaws and delicious useless things, generally, of Vienna and Constantinople and Florence and Rome. Still, at all events, we may grant the inexhaustible copiousness of Paris in manufacture, and the cunning skill with which she displays the gimcracks she has to sell. To me her show is slightly monotonous, for I learned my Boulevards, my Palais Royal, my Rue de Rivoli, my Chaussée d'Antin, my Rue de la Paix by heart years ago. I recognise all the porte-monnaies and reticules, the flower-stands and card-racks, the sham cameos and imitation jet, the bronze Venuses of Milo, the Sèvres china and spurious Dresden shepherdesses, the *moquette* arm-chairs and *sièu de verre* footstools, as old, old friends. The shopkeepers must keep a prodigious stock of replicas on hand; for we know full well that the pretty things are eagerly bought by foreigners, and yet, come to Paris when you will, and at intervals as long or short as you please, and you will find precisely the same pretty things in the same shop-windows. Statuettes draped in Algerian onyx are the latest novelties; and yet the introduction of onyx on the Boulevards dates from at least five years back. Even on the old Quai Voltaire, the historical home of *bric-à-brac*, and in those musty, charming streets the Rues Bonaparte, des Saints Pères, et de Seine (the last soon to be pulled down by the ruthless Haussmann), it is hard for an old Paris man to find anything new. I filled my scrap-portfolio years ago with those old engravings after Callot and Goya and Boucher and Fragonard, with here and there a bluff Morland or Rowlandson turning up among the Frenchmen, like a fly, or rather a blue-bottle, in amber. I longed as vainly in the year 1847 to possess some of the pretty little things from the old-curiosity shops as I long, now, in 1867. The old clocks, the ravishing little ivory carvings, the *céladon* and *rose du Barry* porcelain, the *Henri Deux* slabs, the signet-rings, the duodecimo Books of Hours, the cabinets and tripods and china monsters, the Palissy ware and filigree

brooches, and jewelled poniards and Venice mirrors are all there; and if now and again a well-remembered curiosity-shop in some back settlement of the quay-country has disappeared, it is because the street in which it existed, with half-a-dozen thoroughfares in addition, have been knocked into one huge, new, staring boulevard by Hausmann the Ruthless aforesaid. Who shall say but a fate more awful than that of Ixion or the Danaïdes may be reserved in Tartarus for that Destructive-Constructor? He may be doomed to go on building new boulevards, and pulling them down again as soon as they are built, for ever and ever. The Immortals can scarcely fail to punish the rash Prefect who has striven to forestall the course of Time and to erect a new city before the old one had run its appointed race. Half of the Paris demolished by this Prometheus of lath and plaster was no older than Hanover-square; and lives there a London architect bold enough to suggest the demolition of *that* stately mass of red brick with stone dressings?

But the charm of the pretty little things of Paris lies in their almost infinite quantity; and those visitors who are comparatively strange to the gay city are forthwith entranced by the dazzling display, and, taking out their purses, purchase profusely and pay lavishly. In vain have I striven to point out to inexperienced tourists who have "run over to Paris" for a week or a fortnight that they may buy their photographic albums, their *blagues-à-labac*, their electro-gilt paper-weights, their lacquered card-trays, their Russia-leather cigar-cases and handkerchief boxes—all "warranted Paris-made"—at Parkins and Gotto's, or Mechi's or Rodrigue's, quite as cheaply as in Paris, if not twenty per cent cheaper; for in proportion as the quick-witted Paris shopkeeper becomes alive to the fact that his customer is an Englishman and a stranger in Paris does he practise the pleasant arts of chicanery and extortion. I will go further and say that, if you transact your business discreetly, you may buy French china on Ludgate-hill and French imitation jewelry in the Burlington Arcade at a more moderate rate than you can obtain those articles in Paris. As for bonnets—which surely fall within the category of pretty little things—if you think they are to be obtained more cheaply in the Rue de la Paix than in Regent-street, I would entreat you, as Charles Fox entreated the First Consul Bonaparte, to "put all that nonsense out of your head." The Vyses do not sell their *chapeaux* for twopence halfpenny, and you must pay for peeping at Madam Parson's. But a Paris bonnet! It is terrible to think upon. I went in the other day to Madame Lucy Hocquet's in Paris. I bought a cheese-plate, and I came out, five minutes afterwards, more carefully flayed than St. Bartholomew. I was led, like a lamb, a short time—a *very* short time—afterwards into the Cave of Trophonius—I mean into the den of Cacus—I would say into the bonnet-shop of Madame Jenny Navarre. I became the possessor of the miniature model, in lace and ribbons, of a jockey's saddle, and I emerged into

the open "done" as brown as St. Lawrence. Think not I am indulging in a slang term when I allude to the "doing" of that Saint. 'Twas the holy man who himself used it. "Turn me," he said cheerfully to the tormentors who had bound him to the gridiron—"turn me; for I think I am 'done' on one side." And there is a bit of St. Lorenzo's flesh to this day in the reliquary of the Escorial—a morsel of muscle *tostado y asado*, toasted and roasted, as the custode tells you—so witness if I lie.

This then is my position. I refuse to acknowledge the supremacy of Paris in pretty little things; and more than that, I doubt, and very gravely doubt, whether the genius of the French people is capable of appreciating that which is really a Pretty Little Thing in the proper acceptation of the term. The French are, at the best—I say it in no spiteful spirit, for I have known both the country and the people for thirty years, and love both dearly—a geometrical and stereotyped race. They are the least eccentric community in the world. Every man has his groove, and moves in his groove, and can't remove from it without permission from the administration, the police, and "la famille." I should add perhaps the concierge to complete the hierarchy of despots. The tyranny of the porter's lodge is awful. I have an American friend who pays about six hundred pounds a year for three little birdcages on the Boulevard Haussmann. Do you know that his concierge had lately the impudence to inform him that he could not have groceries or vegetables delivered at his door after ten o'clock in the morning? The obvious course to be pursued in a free country after such an intimation would be to kick the concierge down stairs; but in geometrical and stereotyped France no such vagaries are tolerated. You must hear and obey your hall-porter. He takes tithe and toll from your wood and your wine, your candles and your coals; and if you kick or knock him down, you will be tried and sent to prison. Lately a lodger, irritated by a long course of firewood robbery on the part of his porter, carefully bored some holes in a few logs, and filled up these orifices with gunpowder. The next time the concierge cooked his *pot au feu* over stolen logs, there was a blow-up. Nobody was hurt; but Justice has laid hold of the lodger, and it will go hard with him, I fear.

Frequently, I hasten to admit, this geometrical and stereotyped people have a bright idea—literary, artistic, mechanical, or scientific. But they run the bright idea to death; they stereotype it, and print it by hundreds of thousands. And hence the sameness in their pretty little things. Five hundred thousand pairs of legs arrayed in silk tights are at this moment gleaming on two hundred and fifty thousand *cartes de visite* in the Paris shop-windows. One grows absolutely to loathe the portraits of the brazen creatures with false hair and fig-leaf costumes with which the photograph-frames abound. The song of *La Femme à barbe*, again, was a droll one; but we have now the

bearded woman in oil, in water, in lithography, in terra-cotta, in biscuit, in chocolate, and in sugar-candy. They will write novels, poems, and plays about the *femme à barbe*. They need only to give her the Cross of the Legion of Honour, and her popularity will be complete. She has her groove, and continues to move in it. The *Dame aux Camélias* has hers, and moves in that. And the same people go to the same restaurants, and haunt the same cafés; and the same *rentiers* read or doze in the same *cabinets de lecture*; and the same drums are drubbed before the same red-breeched soldiers; and the same artfully arranged shops overflow with the same gimcracks, day after day and year after year. I never went back to London, even if my absence had been but of a week's duration, without lighting on something new, were it but a shirt-collar or a brace-button. But in Paris, on each recurring visit, I look in vain for some addition to the stock of nick-nacks. If there be indeed anything new to the Parisians, the chances are ten to one that the novelty has come from London or Vienna. Take the electro-gilt weights and table ornaments: they are English. Take the wooden fans painted with birds, and the reticules and cigar-cases of perfumed leather, and the heraldically-painted glasses: they are Austrian and Bohemian. The most exasperating thing is that the French, in their sublime and inextinguishable self-conceit, really imagine that they have invented all these pretty little things, and we English and Germans have borrowed our notions from them. There is no use in arguing with a Frenchman to the contrary. His mind is made up, geometrically, stereotypically. "*C'est comme ça*," he says, shrugging his shoulders and smirking; and it is idle to pursue the discussion further. In one of the French picture-galleries at the Universal Exhibition there is a monstrous battle-piece by the late Hippolyte Bellangé—a fine painting undeniably, but throughout exaggerated and false—representing the charge of Milhaud's cuirassiers on our squares at Waterloo. All the world knows that no braver men ever wore breastplates and jackboots than these cuirassiers of Milhaud, but that when they came to knock their heads against the British phalanx they came to irremediable grief. To look at M. Bellangé's picture, the French are getting the best of the fight everywhere, and the English are nowhere; or rather, our redcoats are sprawling on the ground, dead or dying, or disarmed and craving quarter. Just such a ludicrous perversion of historic truth is visible in another big performance by the same master—"the Old Guard" at Waterloo, with Cambronne disdainfully refusing to surrender to an English officer, who is arrayed in the traditional swallow-tailed coat, high stand-up collar, enormous shirt-frill, bell-pull epaulettes, and hessian boots, and has the traditional red whiskers and gleaming teeth, without which no French artist would dream of representing an English soldier. "*La Garde meurt, mais ne se rend pas*," cries Cambronne, waving his sword. Never has *la blague* been so eloquently translated into oil. It is, however, perfectly notorious that General Cambronne

id anything of the sort. Whether he uttered the filthy expletive attributed to him by M. Victor Hugo in *Les Misérables* is a moot-point one thing is certain : that he, and as many of his Guards as did not save themselves by running away, did surrender themselves to the English, and became prisoners of war ; in which respect they were better off than if they had fallen into the hands of the Prussians, and become no prisoners, and whose answer to the "*Sauve qui peut*" was a "*Spare none*" in High Dutch. But is anything to be gained by holding up a Frenchman's eyes, and placing before him the plain truth? Nothing whatever. To the end of time—or of French history at least—he will believe that Cambronne refused to surrender; that the French cuirassiers totally routed the British infantry; that the French went down with the tricolor nailed to the mast, and all France crying "*Vive la République!*" that Fontenoy was won by the French, du Roi and not by the Irish Brigade; that Joan of Arc was saved by the English and not by the French clergy, who were enraged and infuriated by her claim to supernatural powers; that Crecy and Poitiers were mere skirmishes, and Blenheim and Malplaquet drawn battles. In the popular Life of Napoleon it is stated that in 1805 one of Napoleon's marshals gave the Austrians a beating at Austerlitz. "Thus," continues M. de St. Hilaire, "the reverse was effected by French arms when the Maréchal de Boufflers encountered Eugene was amply atoned for." The fact that Eugene of Savoy was a colleague in that famous victory was of course quite beneath the notice of the French historian. What was that colleague's name? Wasn't it Churchill? Yes, John Churchill, Duke of Marl-

borough. You cannot convince a Frenchman in matters of dispute so serious as these, how are you to hope to persuade him that he has not been wronged in pretty little things? *Le Français, né malin, crée le proverbe*, says a French proverb. The Frenchman invented nothing new. The vaudeville, or farce with couplets put to music and interpolated in the dialogue, is an importation from Italy, and an exotic and an abortion disgraceful to the French stage, was introduced seventy years since by Rétif de la Bretonne. Give up any hope of persuading a Frenchman that he was not the inventor of the *vaudeville*. As well might you strive to convince him that Racine, Molière, and Voltaire are not quite equal, as tragic poets, to Shakespeare. He has his *idée fixe*; he is geometrical; he is stereotyped; his opinions cannot be altered. "I went to the opera in Paris," writes the amusement-guard Jacques Casanova, "and I saw a ballet very splendidly danced, and purporting to represent the Carnival of Venice. I was surprised to quarrel with the inaccuracies as to costume and architecture presented. That the Ducal Palace should be on the right side of the piazza, and the Zecca on the left, did not matter. When I saw the senator in a coat of yellow brocade and pink silk hose in lieu

of the historical *tabarra*, I only smiled, and a pea-green gondola did not offend me; but when I saw the Doge and the Council of Ten, arrayed in robes of striped satin, and with cocked hats on their heads, advance to the foot-lights and dance a coranto, I confess that I thought things had been carried a little too far. And when I remonstrated with my neighbour on this most glaring absurdity, he frowned, told me that Paris was the capital of the civilisation of the world, and, adjusting the hilt of his sword, turned his back on me." It is about a hundred years since Jacques Casanova wrote his amusing ribaldries; but if I were sitting, any night this week, in the stalls of the Grand Opéra in Paris during the performance of Verdi's *Don Carlos*, and were to point out to my neighbour that the libretto of the opera in question was about the most grotesque piece of balderdash ever penned, that the Opera Escorial is no more like the grim Spanish convent-palace among the mountains than the Leicester-square Alhambra is like that miracle of taste and splendour at Granada, and that the operatic Philip the Second resembles the austere fanatical son of Charles the Fifth and husband of Bloody Mary about as much as the captain of a penny steamer resembles an Admiral of the Blue,—that neighbour, without putting his hand to a sword which it is no longer the custom to wear, would shrug his shoulders, opine *que c'était comme ça*, and hint, if I pursued the argument, that I ennuyéd him.

I am of course aware that there are two ways of judging a thing. It may be pretty and little from your point of view, and ugly and big from mine. This is what I saw last Good Friday at the corner of the Rue de la Paix and the Rue Neuve des Capucines.

There is a shop at that corner—a shop for the sale of articles in electro-plate; *argenterie Ruolz* is, I think, the name of the stuff. To me it is horrible; glistening, garish, tasteless in form, and offensive in colour. I would sooner eat with a wooden spoon from pewter platters than off Ruolz. The shopkeeper, on the approved principle of making more of a bad thing than of a good one, has filled an entire window with his electro-plated spoons and forks. There they are by hundreds, heaped together pell-mell. The vast sheet of plate-glass shows nothing behind it but spoons and forks infinitely repeated; and at night, when the effect of this staring menticule is heightened by two blazing gas-lights, with reflectors outside the window, the result is a perfect blaze of sham silver. Do not some of our cheap grocers resort to similar devices to show off their raisins and figs?—Well, there halted at this corner on Good Friday, soon after sundown, an old nun and her nephew. I know not why I say he was her nephew; but I would go bail to any amount that he stood in that relation to her. She must have belonged to one of the non-cloistered orders; but she was not a Sister of Charity. A very plump, rosy, jovial-looking dame was this nun, clad in flowing robes of soft white flannel and linen, and with a great silver cross hung round her neck with a blue ribbon.

She was an abbess, perhaps. No barefooted religious was she. Decorously lengthy as were her skirts, it was patent to the observer that she wore nice clean white stockings—*muy bien tirado*, as the Spaniards say: we have no English equivalent for the term, or I should not use the Spanish—and good stout shoes. I never saw a better face, so calm, so cheerful, and so innocent. She was the kind of abbess who would have divided the word with the Little Sister—the only word that would make the mule go—and meant no harm by it, as set down in Sterne's matchless story. I wonder whence Sterne stole the story? Her hair being cut off, according to conventual rule, one very powerful index to her age was missing:—not an infallible index, however, for this is an epoch in which folks go gray before their age, and, *per contra*, matrons well-stricken in years suddenly appear in flowing tresses of bright scarlet. I was sure, however, that the crop concealed beneath her nunly coif was of a uniform silver-gray—the hue which makes old women who have once been beautiful still beautiful, even in their extreme age. As for her cheeks, they were just like Catherine pears—"the side that's next the sun." As to her eyes, they were as blue and clear as that Peerless Pool in Sweden, which is so lucid and so deep that at high noon you may see the stars reflected in it. And although she had many wrinkles, they were more like some delicate engine-turning on the watch of Time than the heavy furrows which the stern ploughman drives in coarser soil. As good an old woman, I vouch, as ever lived. Full of faith in all the Saints and all the Martyrs and all their miracles. Full too of mercy and loving-kindness for the poor, and the sick, and those who are crippled. Always ready with a present of snuff for the father confessor of the convent, and bestowing her scant leisure on the embroidery of a grand new rochet for Monseigneur the Bishop, or a pair of comfortable slippers for his Vicar-general. A great hand at candying and preserving, and the possessor of a recipe for a cordial as sweet as honey, but as strong as China ginger, which, properly advertised, would run hard the famous liqueur of the Grande Chartreuse. Eminently skilled in emulsions and embrocations and febrifuges, and the concoction of tisanes. An educatrix of youth perhaps, with some very sound but simple notions on education: that if children are good, they ought to have holidays and sugar-plums given them; and that if they are naughty they ought to be whipped. Altogether an inoffensive, well-meaning, well-doing lady of the old school. One need not be a nun to be twin-sister to her, perhaps. Your grandmother, my dear, was her very image, yet she had no end of children. But the portrait of a good old nun is one that should always be painted when the type appears: for in these morbid, sensational days of "Mysteries of the Convent," "Horrors of the Monastic Orders," "Priests, Women, and Families," and Maria Monk (what a liar she was!) and Henrietta Caracciolo books, we have set up a diseased and phantasmagoric standard of the nun. If she be

young, we picture her as a green-sick girl, pining away behind her bars, exposed to the wiles of a wicked Jesuit, or longing to elope with a captain of dragoons. If she be old, she must, to suit our imaginings, be crabbed and atrabilious and tyrannical, always commending hair-shirts and spiked girdles to the professed, or threatening the novices with a terrific cat-o'-nine-tails. If you wish to see the real old lady nun, as, for the benefit of the poor and the edification of all Christian folks, she is visible all the world over, take this old lady nun at the corner of the Rue Neuve des Capucines. But pshaw! she is a shadow. I know nothing about her. She might have been as dire a Megæra as that dreadful Mother Superior in Diderot's *Religieuse*—one of the cleverest, wickedest, falsest novels ever written. If you desire to see the good old nun, the nice old nun, the dear old nun—Dorcas doubled with St. Elizabeth of Hungary and strengthened with Mrs. Fry and Miss Nightingale—go to Lower Canada. There, in the tranquil and happy French towns on the banks of the St. Lawrence—there, in the old-fashioned stone châteaux of Montreal, and beneath the glinting tin roofs of Quebec—there, in hospitals and infirmaries and orphanages and reformatories and almshouses, you shall see the good sisters patiently tending the sick and infirm, or training up the young; bearing with all the querulousness of old men and women; viewing with smiling calmness the gambols of prattling children who call them “mother”—although, poor souls, they are never to know the joys and pains of maternity. Quite cut off, quite isolated and banished from that which lights up the gloomy path; and yet not banished from *love*: these good mothers and sisters are still privileged to love their kind—the lowly and the wretched and the forlorn. I do not think I know a more affecting story of such a good old nun as she whom I have striven to draw than this: A couple who had been married for many years, and were passing happy, but very rich, were visiting a convent in the south of France. The old abbess exhibited all her candies and preserves and cordials—all the warm hose and nightcaps she had knitted for the poor. “You must be happy indeed,” she said, as she admired a diamond cross which the lady wore. The lady sighed. She had no children, she whispered. “Ah!” prattled the old lady, “that is bad. You must pray. You must pray very much indeed. You must go to Rome and beg the Saint Père to bless this little medal for you”—and she gave her a picture of St. Anne. “*Et tenez, ma fille,*” she concluded; “*je dirai ce soir même une prière à Marie, qui est la Mère de toutes les mères, et vous en aurez des enfants,—allez.*” A rash and foolish old nun to prophesy, was she not?

Dear me, dear me, here have I been keeping you for I know not how long at the corner of the Rue Neuve des Capucines, without bringing you to that which has really been the latent text for the whole of this paper. It is not much of a text. It does not extend beyond forks and spoons of the well-known fiddle-pattern. The nun had evidently come

and Holy Week in Paris, and her nephew—a shapely-looking lad, whom I conjecture to have been a clerk in a drapery store, or hawking in the *calicot* line—was taking her about and showing her the . 'Twas but a Barmecide entertainment after all; for Good Friday, I believe, the very grimmest of the fasts which the Romanists observe, and it is hard to have to look at a colossal display of forks and spoons, when you are precluded by ecclesiastical taboo from partaking of much as an egg or a pat of butter. Some such thoughts as these came into my head when I saw the nun and her nephew stopping before the window of “Ruolz;” for it was growing very near dinner-time, and my friends having strictly forbidden me to fast during this present Lent, I was on my way to the Café de la Madeleine, to see what M. Durand would do for me in the way of a Chateaubriand. When the good old abbess saw the forks and spoons, she clasped her hands for a while in silent admiration, and then she broke out in murmured exclamations of astonishment and delight: “*Dieu! que c’est joli, que c’est charmant, et délicieux! mais c’est inouï! Jamais de ma vie je n’ai vu de si jolies choses.*” I passed and repassed the street-corner twice, on purpose, but the nun and her nephew were still there. She could not tear herself away from the forks and spoons. Placid old soul! I should have liked to buy a double set, and in real silver too; but the times are hard, and the cost of everything is augmented in consequence of the Exhibition.

When we ever improve, I wonder, on that downright old proverb, “what tells us that what is one man’s meat is another man’s poison?” and I, so long as I had known this Ruolz *quincaillerie*, been abusing and sneering at it the ugliest ware in Christendom; and behold this good abbess clapped her hands with joy to see it, and thought it the best and tastefullest ware in the world. I can understand why it attracted her. It was the *cliquant*, the silvery sheen and sparkle, that was the enchantment. Never mind if it was a sham. Never mind if artistically it was worthless, and in design outraged every artistic feeling. It was white and clean and glittered, and that was enough for her. Her code of æsthetics was theologically akin to the tidy house-code. What are the prettiest things in the world to your notable wife? a snowy table-cloth, and a well-beeswaxed chest of drawers of clean sheets and pillow-cases, and the smell of lavender: nay, she has well washed up her cups and saucers, I question whether she would not think them—poor as might be their earthenware, and shabby by their ornamentation—far prettier than any miracles of pottery in a Soulages, a Gladstone, or a Bernal collection might display. I confess myself to a slight weakness in regard to comparative prettiness. I was not precisely—my enemies’ libels to the contrary—“born in a garret” or “in a kitchen bred.” I am very fond of works of art, of pigotry and virtew” as Mrs. Ramsbottom would call them. I have the treasures of the Green chamber at Dresden and the Palace at Versailles, which last contains perhaps the rarest museum of pretty

little things to be found in the whole world. I know what there is in the South Kensington Museum and the Hôtel de Cluny, in the Chambers of Potsdam and in the boudoirs of St. Cloud. I have passed about thirty hours every week in the Paris Universal Exhibition, where there might be seen, surely, a sufficiency of pretty little things to satisfy the hungriest amateur ;—and yet after all I am fain to acknowledge that my beau ideal of pretty littleness is to be found in a well-ordered kitchen. The truth is that I have a Dutch or Low-art mind, and not an Italian or High-art one. I could never see anything in Giotto's chapel at Padua beyond a lot of monstrous daubs, wretchedly drawn, and of the penny-plain-and-twopence-coloured order. I never saw the Campo Santo at Pisa without yawning, or Giulio Romano's preposterous frescoes at Mantua without suffering from headache, or Pomerancia's frightful pictures of the Christian Martyrs in San Stefano Rotondo at Rome without having the horrors ; yet a "Cuisine Hollandaise" by Ostade or Teniers, or a "Dutch Housewife" by Maes or Jan Steen, will always fill me with pleasure. What neatness and symmetry you see in those culinary regions ! What contrasts of colour ! What delicate play of light and shade ! There is in the Berlin museum a picture by a German master, earlier than Albert Dürer or even Memling, representing the kitchen of the lady and gentleman who gave the banquet which took place on the occasion of that Marriage famous to all time. The devout German has not presumed to depict the Scriptural scene itself. I wish that some of our modern painters were as devout and as humble, and that they would let the Old and New Testaments alone on canvas. He has merely hinted, through a half-closed doorway, at what is going on in the hall of feasting, and has thrown his whole energies into the kitchen. Brightly glow the pots and pans ; snowy gleam pie-board, and dresser, and shelves, and kitchen-table ; snowier is the well-scrubbed floor—they might have eaten the marriage dinner off it ; ruddy beams the copper in which the conserves are stewing ; golden glances the brass mortar in which materials for sauces and stuffings are brayed ; merrily turn the spits ; stately swings the porridge-pot ; bright shine the enamelled tiles on the chimney sides ; fierce glows the fire ; and gently curls the blue smoke upwards. Then the tables are laden with still-life : fruit and flowers and legs of mutton and geese and turkeys and chickens and sausages (not, I hope, of pork) and cabbages and turnips and carrots and manchets of bread and knives with handles of curiously-carved ivory and "twelve-apostle" spoons—it is before the era of forks—and daintily-embroidered napkins and tall old flagons of Rhenish wine. Hoch ! I should like to live in such a kitchen. I would be *magister coquine*, and rap thrice on the dresser with a rolling-pin when my dinner was dished. I would be a "foolish fat scullion," and scrub the pots or wash-up the platters. I would never ask to go upstairs. Why should I pine for the great world, and its frauds and its intrigues and its bitter disappointments and its rewards—short-lived

and insufficient at the best—when here below was a bellyful of victuals every day and an infinity of pretty little things to look upon? It was in such a kitchen as this, you may be assured, and *not* in the parlour. As the legend would have it, that the Queen of old sat eating bread and honey; the while the King her spouse—the avaricious male brute—sat in his counting-house counting out his money.

I am inclined to think that my dear old nun had a touch, too, of kitchen kindness about her, although she went further than I did in admiring the Ruolz forks and spoons. If you had taken her to Rome, she would have stared in dumb amazement at the cloudy, and, if truth must be told, the now muddy and muddled glories of the Sistine Chapel; and the acres of painted roofs and panels in St. John Lateran and St. Maria Maggiore would have astounded her, and nothing more. But she would have clapped her hands with glee at the *cliquant* and toy-hop decoration of the Baldacchino and St. Peter's confessional, at the wax-work show over the high altar of the Ara Coeli at Christmas time, and at the infinite prettinesses of decoration in the church of the Gesù. They are all of the spoon-and-fork order of splendour. Perhaps they remind her of her own little chapel in her quiet nunnery at home, with the plated candlesticks, and the needlework on the altar, and the coloured lithographs of saints and ecstasies, and the doll of Our Lady, dressed up in artificial flowers and glass beads and tinsel and foil-paper. Have you not seen little chapels abroad hung round with votive offerings—models of ears and eyes and noses and hands and feet? Well, abating the fact that those offerings are usually of pure silver, they have the glitter and glare of the spoons and forks at the corner of the Rue Neuve des Capucines; and that is why, I fancy, the nun spoke of them as *les plus jolies choses du monde*. You who love pretty little things be tolerant. Your neighbour may not think them quite so pretty. There is not only a gold and silver side to every shield, but an underside, which may be of wood, or even of common leather.

MOONSHINE IN PARIS*

Champs Elysées, July 1867,—Night.

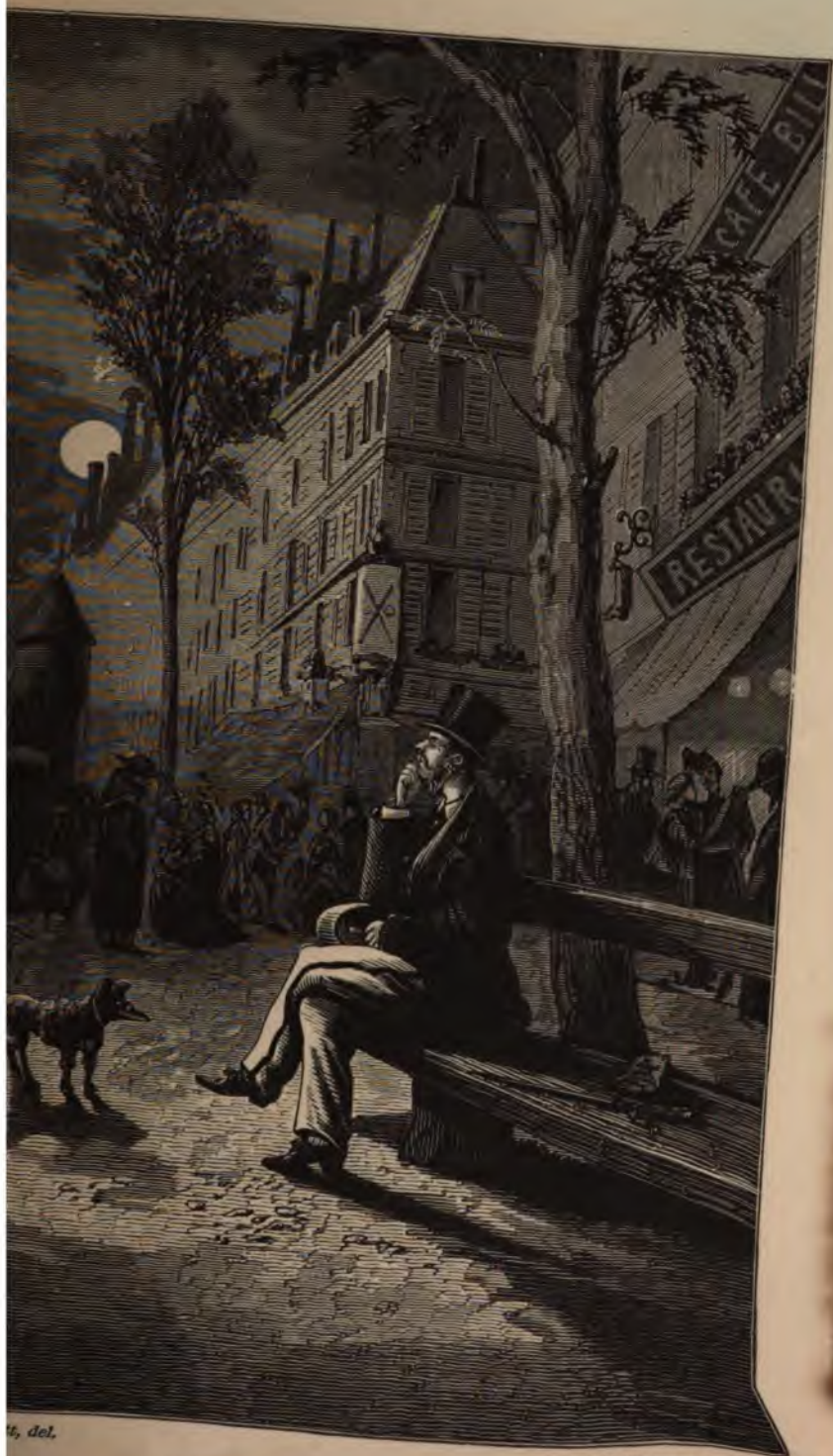
How bright the dazzling Moonlight falls around !
Raining a shower of silver on the scene,
'Trembling adown the clear blue skies of Night—
Light, full of memories and starry dreams !

Lively the stream of Life goes rushing by,
Down the broad street; while airily aloft
The trees their cool green feathery foliage droop,
Scarce stirring in the breath of Summer's night,—
Like verdant banks on the broad stream of Life.
As eddies from that stream, around me here,
Under the trees, in groups the idlers sit
(But are they idlers ?) from the rest apart ;
And the bright laugh of Youth peals forth at times,
Like chime of merry bells on the still air.

Seated 'neath this acacia, with its mass
Of white blooms drooping like a bridal veil,
I gaze up dreamily into the depths
Of the blue vault, where scarce the stars can show
For the full shining of the lady Moon.
How like to loveliest Woman's is her face,
As from her height amid the wastes of heaven
She looks down quietly, in radiant grace,
Upon the clang and stir of busy Earth—
Looks with a face so calm and bright and sweet
Upon this hour of man's brief happiness !

Ah me ! how like *her* eyes !—hers, as we sat
Here, a brief month ago ! The scene the same :
The same sweet moonlight, and the lively throng.
Yes, 'twas "Elysium" here, in truth, that night !
How I drank-in the lustre of her face !
Fresh from the Northern hills, where blooms the heather,
Where cascades fall in snowy showers of foam,
And silvern rivers glimmer through the vale—

* Lines picked up in the Hôtel de — (3^{me} étage), Paris.



et, del.

MOONSHINE IN PARIS.

W. L. Thomas, sc.



She wore the dewy freshness of her clime,
 Link'd with the lustre of the sunny South.
 What worlds of light and love lay in her eyes!
 What perfume of her presence! Yes, it seemed
 She shed around a purple odorous light,
 As from a garden of all-brilliant flowers.
 To look into her large full-beaming eyes,
 As doth the mystic glory of the stars
 When we do watch their splendour, till the soul,
 Drawn upward, loseth all its meaner thoughts
 In trackless regions of Infinity;
 And dreams arise of that far unseen Home
 For which the spirit yearns—that realm where spreads
 The tender light of ever-setting suns,—
 Home of the Beautiful! where all that's bright,
 Where all that thrills the Poet with strange thoughts,
 Will dawn on us at last,—and all be peace:
 Peace—the fulfilment of the soul's desires!

Why did she slight me? What though I am short,
 And she is tall and graceful as the palm;
 She must have heard—have felt—how great a soul
 Throbs in me—ay, and throbbed, too, all for her.
 I could have let the wide world slip away,
 Were I but left a-kneeling at her feet.
 This spot, with *her*, were all God's worlds to me!

Well, let it pass. But how it all comes back,
 Here as I sit, dreaming the night away,
 Idling the hours with but this flimsy weed,—
 Watching the puffs go curling up the air
 And melt into the moonlight's silvery haze!

'Tis very strange she should have touched me so,
 And yet herself been scatheless from love's flame:
 It is not usual. Perchance she loved—
 Ay, loves me, after all! . . . But shall we meet?
 (Faith, the cigar is out!) . . . Well, such is Life!
 Fate's full of sad caprices. . . . I will hence.

(Kisses his small white hand to the Moon.)

Good-night, thou radiant one! . . . So like to HER!

*[Thinks of calling a fiacre; but finding only one franc
in his pocket, walks home, to the Hôtel de —*

COUNTRY NEWSPAPERS

JOURNALISM is the most remarkable development of what Mr. Matthew Arnold calls "the modern spirit" which the age has produced. The flood of novels, poetry, and light literature, over which so many vain lamentations have been uttered, is a far less adequate representative of the actual thought and feeling of the day than a file of the *Times*, or even of those minor journals which, within their circle, exercise a not less powerful influence. And this arises not from the fact that works of imagination fail to reflect the periods which produce them, but because so few of the books which pretend to that title are more than a mere *réchauffé* of the thoughts of other people. The few which attain the highest rank are certainly invaluable. They represent the crystallised result of what the age has done and produced, and with them the newspaper, which is built up of the facts upon which the imagination works, cannot of course be compared. As the representative of the age it is, however, infinitely more valuable than the third-rate novel or poem. While works of this last description of the highest class will be a material aid to the inevitable New Zealander of the year 4000, the poorer kinds, which are thick as blackberries in autumn, will only hinder his researches and obscure his notions. On the other hand, the newspaper, telling of what men do, and giving in its leading columns a more or less faithful picture of the thoughts and motives which have guided them, will be of even greater value to the future historical student than the finest poem or romance which has ever been written. But apart from their reflection of the time in the matter they contain, newspapers represent it not less by the mechanical perfection of their production. It is only by the modern principle of subdividing labour, and by the aid of the modern application of steam-machinery, that present results could be attained. Until such appliances were brought to bear, the newspaper was a plant of very feeble growth. The sheet was of diminutive size, it was very indifferently printed, its price was extremely high, its circulation was consequently small, and the emoluments of its producers proportionately limited. Now, however, the reverse of all this is the case. The mechanical perfection which has been attained in other matters has also been reached in journalism. A single number of the *Times* contains the matter of a stout octavo volume; it is printed with wonderful accuracy, and is sold at a price which still maintains it a rival to its penny contemporaries, in contrast with some of which it is cheap indeed. The editorial and general staff are well known to be liberally recompensed for their services; while the owners have, notwithstanding, accumulated colossal fortunes, and still derive a princely income from the paper.

It is not, however, with the Leviathan of Printing-house-square that we are concerned at the present moment. Mighty as is the *Times*, it is but one journal out of many after all; and representative though it be of a very large class, there is a still larger body politic the members of which rarely, if ever, read the *Times*. To begin with, 241 newspapers of various kinds are published in London alone. Of these, 22 are daily papers; and it may be assumed that of the readers of these at least one-half do not see the *Times* from one year's end to the other. Besides these London daily papers, 84 dailies are published in the provinces; and amongst the readers of these a glimpse at the *Times* is infinitely rarer than most Londoners would imagine. These latter journals are, however, by no means a complete representative of the appetite of the provinces for news. In the whole of the United Kingdom there are no fewer than 1294 journals, of which 241 are published in London, and the remaining 1053 in various parts of the country. Great though these figures are, however, they are somewhat under the mark. In several small towns in the provinces little sheets are published on market-days by the local printers, which are "never heard of half-a-mile from home," and which do not enter into the calculation. Understated though this number be, it nevertheless represents an enormous power; and when it is considered that of these thousand-and-odd journals a very great proportion are in their way every whit as influential and as widely circulated as any of the London newspapers of the second order, it will be seen that the position of the provincial press is by no means unimportant. Take, by way of example, the case of Manchester. That city, with its neighbourhood, supports three daily and four weekly newspapers. Two of these latter are purely local in their character; but the three daily papers are beyond question "powers" in the world of journalism. One of them, the *Manchester Guardian*, holds in the north of England almost precisely the same position as is held by the *Daily News* in the south, and has a much larger circulation. Its leading articles are always sensible, not unfrequently brilliant; its news is exceedingly well arranged; and the exclusive information of its London correspondent is often quoted, even by metropolitan journals. Of the thoroughly independent spirit with which it is conducted, and of the freedom from petty personal and partisan prejudices which it displays, it is impossible to speak too highly. Even those whose political principles are most strongly opposed to the "Manchester School" are willing to own the ability with which this journal is conducted, and to respect the tone of good feeling which is constantly visible in its columns. Indeed, quite as much may be said for the *Courier* and for the *Examiner and Times*, both journals most deservedly taking prominent positions as admirably conducted newspapers; the former representing the Conservative, and the latter the extreme Liberal element. Leeds, again, though somewhat smaller than Manchester, supports its two daily and two weekly papers. The Liberal paper, the *Mercury*, one of the oldest in the kingdom, has a reputation second to that of no other

journal. It is still in the family of the proprietor who started it more than a century and a half ago, and still retains the prestige which has clung to it so long. The other paper, the *Yorkshire Post*, which represents the Conservative party, is not inferior in tone or management: its leaders are admirably written, and the news is selected and condensed with rare skill and ability.

But it is not alone in the English provinces that good journalism is to be found out of London. Scotland and Ireland have a newspaper press of their own, very remarkable and very characteristic. In the former of these kingdoms there are 138, and in the latter 128 journals, of which 14 Scottish and 13 Irish papers are published daily. Of the Scottish journals the most important are, of course, those published in Edinburgh and Glasgow; but those of the latter city, though more numerous, are in tone far inferior to those of the former. It would, indeed, be difficult to find two journals more ably conducted or more satisfactory to the reader than the two which represent the great political parties of the country in Edinburgh. The *Courant* on the Conservative, and the *Scotsman* on the Liberal side are, as regards news, about on a level. Irrespective of all party considerations it must, however, be owned that the leading columns of the Conservative journal are the better filled. Like Mr. Thackeray's ideal *Pall-Mall Gazette*, it has the inestimable advantage of being "written by gentlemen for gentlemen;" and though it sometimes makes mistakes, like the rest of the world, it keeps up, on the whole, fairly to its pretensions. Of the Irish press, one would rather say as little as possible. Political feeling runs very high in the sister isle, and politicians have not always the art of expressing their sentiments with that moderation and temperateness of tone which the cooler nature of the Englishman has learned to appreciate. One or two of the "Liberal" and "religious" papers of the country are, for truculence and ferocity quite equal to the worst of the New-York journals. It is highly probable that the writers who thus express themselves mean nothing more virulent than the calmer spirits who supply the London press with "copy;" but a certain kind of article being in fashion, the producers set themselves to meet the demand. It is, however, only fair to say that *Saunders' News-Letter*, the *Freeman's Journal*, *Irish Times*, *Daily Express*, and a few other newspapers, are managed in a manner and written with a spirit highly creditable to the good sense and great abilities of the efficient editorial staffs engaged upon them; while several of the Irish weeklies appear to be animated by an earnest desire to benefit their country, without sowing the seeds of religious or of political discord.

The journalism which has attained to these goodly proportions is a thing of no mushroom growth. For nearly two hundred years it has been in course of development, until, from a few little halfpenny sheets published irregularly in widely-scattered towns and villages, it has become the power it now is. Its first appearance was in the time of the great Civil War, when the contending armies carried small travelling

with them, and printed accounts of their movements at the places at which they stopped. Thus in 1639 the King's printer made a few sheets at Newcastle-on-Tyne. Three years later a similar one made its appearance at Oxford; and a few months afterwards a journal was published for a little while at Bristol. The great civil war, however, and the tranquillity of the kingdom once more over, the press became silent, and the provincial public were thrown upon such chance news from the capital as was brought by curious travellers who had penetrated so far upon other errands. At the end of the century the change came. In 1695, according to the generally trustworthy information of Mr. Andrews' *History of Journalism*, the first real country newspaper was established. It was the *Lincoln, Rutland, and Stamford Mercury*, published at Stamford, and circulating over a wide extent of country. Eleven years later Norwich followed suit with the *Postman*. It may be noted, by the way, that Norwich appears to have been a very favoured place in this respect at the beginning of the last century, holding then much the position that Manchester does now. Other places soon followed the good example. Early in the century we find papers springing up at Peterborough, York, Worcester, Salisbury, Gloucester, Oxford, Leeds, and Manchester. Many of these still survive. *Berrow's Worcester Journal* continues to serve as the oracle of the hop-growers and sturdy agriculturists of the dear old shire. The *Leeds Mercury*, to which we have justly referred, dates from this period, having made its first public appearance in 1720. *Jackson's Oxford Journal*, a little later in date, still in existence, and retains its reputation amongst a class by no means small or unimportant. Of course the form is in all cases different. Most of the journals began as small weekly sheets, and of them are now large daily papers. Small though they were, however, the editors did not always find it easy to fill them with news. Some of them were sent up to London to be printed—an operation in those days of anything but fast coaches must have made them stale when they reached the hands of their subscribers. Those which were printed on the spot were not in much better plight. The editors had to send expressmen on long journeys to meet the post; the roads being bad, it was no uncommon occurrence for serious accidents to take place. Tradition goes so far as to say that once the editor of the *Leicester Journal* was so destitute of news that he began to print the Bible in the columns of his journal, and got as far as the 10th chapter of Exodus before he could find a sufficiency of municipal affairs to fill his columns. The story may be true; but it has a suspicious likeness to some American inventions to which one can hardly care to pin much faith. All these difficulties were, however, cleared away as time went on. The newspapers grew up from sheets of gossip and chatter to the regular and recognised form. Long articles were introduced, and the opinions expressed in them to be regarded as matters of some importance. With the

quality the number increased, until at the close of the last century England boasted seventy-two provincial papers. Compared with the present number these are, of course, very few; but taking into account the difficulties against which the proprietors had to struggle, the infinitely heavy stamp-duty imposed on their productions, the deficiency of popular education, and the comparatively thin population of the country, we should be rather surprised at its largeness than ashamed of its smallness.

The first quarter of the present century was a busy time for the newspaper press both in town and in the provinces. Foreign affairs excited universal attention; nor were home politics regarded as matters of small importance. To add to the interest which such matters excited, the London press was in the hands of some of the ablest, if less scrupulous, members of their class. The laws too were far more severe than they now are, and were administered with a harshness which of the present day find it difficult to comprehend. More than one prosecution was instituted by the officers of the government for expressions which would nowadays be regarded as no more than legitimate comment; while the proprietors of newspapers were often cast in the damages for libels, which consisted in the publication of proceedings in the law-courts, or in imprudent reports of the expressions of official personages. Yet in spite of all this severity the personality and scurrility of many journals, both in town and country, were beyond anything that is known in the present day. Even Brougham, an advocate of liberty though he always was, protested openly against the violence and licentiousness of the press in the earlier years of the century, though he used a different tone later on, when those violent had been subdued. The arbitrary, severe, and unjust punishments were, however, far more frequent than those of the opposite character. Amongst the sufferers by these, the provincial press was to be found only too frequently. One remarkable trial, or rather set of trials was that in connection with the *Stamford Mercury*, with which every student of newspaper history may be supposed to be familiar. In this matter the *Mercury* would scarcely be thought blameworthy in the present day. Certain rustics of the isle of Ely, sons of farmers and farm-servants chiefly, who had joined the militia, were guilty of a slight insubordination. For this crime they were sentenced to be flogged with such astounding severity that public indignation was kindled against the authors of so execrable a sentence. No fewer than 2500 lashes were ordered to be inflicted on one of the delinquents while the others were treated with scarcely less cruelty. To make matters worse, the punishment was carried out under a guard of German Legion. The popular voice found expression in the *Stamford Mercury*, which characterised the proceeding as it deserved. The *London papers*—the *Examiner*, then under the management of Mr. Hunt, and the *Political Register*, the organ of William Cobbett—concluded the article from their provincial contemporary. Straightway the

of the Crown fell upon the offending journals. Cobbett was convicted, as were his printer and two persons who had sold him. The first was sentenced to a fine of 1000*l.*, to two years' imprisonment in Newgate, and to find heavy securities on his release; and to three months' imprisonment in the King's Bench, and to find securities; and the two newsvendors to two months' imprisonment. Two Hunts were next brought up; but this, their first appearance in the King's Bench, resulted more fortunately than their second. One pleaded their cause with masterly skill; and in spite of the opinion of Lord Ellenborough, that the effect of their article would render the army discontented at a time when Buonaparte was hourly expected, the eloquence of their advocate obtained their acquittal.

A Lincolnshire jury was less kind to the original offender. The editor of the *Stamford Mercury* was unhesitatingly found guilty, and sentenced to a punishment only second in severity to that which fell upon Cobbett.

It must not, however, be supposed that the punishments inflicted upon the press were always as unjust or as excessive in their severity as these. When the trial of Queen Caroline was attracting universal attention, some of the country newspapers followed the example set by some of the London press, and expended a great deal of good ink and paper in foul-mouthed vituperation of that unfortunate woman. The greatest offenders in this way was a man named Flindell, best known as having been the founder of more than one West-England newspaper. In 1821 he was editor and proprietor of a newspaper published at Exeter, with the title of the *Western Luminary*, conducted on high Tory principles. As a matter of course he attacked the queen, and the style of his warfare may be guessed from the fact that one of the articles on the subject contained the following sentence: "Shall a woman who is as notoriously devoted to her husband as Venus—shall such a woman as would, if found on our streets, be committed to Bridewell and whipped, be held up in the name of suffering innocence?" The rest of the article was in the same strain. It is almost needless to say that it was too much even for the state of public opinion to suffer. Mr. Flindell was brought before a jury, and at their recommendation was sent for eight months to the county gaol. His style might, perhaps, have been chastened and corrected by this step, but unfortunately the prison was not a very healthy place. He came out from it, broken in health and spirits, and died a little more than a year after his release.

Reform agitation of 1830-2 brought its share of troubles to the country press as well as to that of the metropolis, although none of the same kind in which country newspapers were concerned were sufficiently important to call for special notice in this place. It may, however, be said for the information of those sanguine politicians who believe that the special attribute of one particular party, that the *excitement of newspapers* for "exciting to hatred and contempt" of

the king's government were more numerous under the Whigs than under the Tories, in the proportion of about three to two. In spite of prosecutions, of actions for libel, and of heavy stamp-duties, the growth of these organs of public opinion has been steady and continuous. What it has been during the last three-and-thirty years may be estimated by comparing the figures already given as representing the press of the present day with those which relate to the year 1833. In that year the total number of newspapers published in the United Kingdom was no more than 369. Of these, 13 were London daily papers, and 36 were weeklies. Scotland, in spite of its high cultivation, had no daily paper; while Dublin, where party politics have always run somewhat higher, had five, besides seven published three times a week. Except for these records of prosperity, the history of the provincial press has been devoid of interest. Now and again a bit of scandal crops up, or a trial for libel of more or less piquancy may be found; but most of the details are simply dull and commonplace records of business matters. It should, however, be remembered that the influence of the press in the provinces as well as in London has generally been on the side of truth and justice. The famous case of exposure by the *Times* of a swindling scheme to defraud the bankers of the Continent may be paralleled by a similar exposure in which the *Manchester Guardian* took part. In the year 1834 this journal published an article denouncing a person then in the town, and busy making large purchases of the principal manufacturers there, as being the agent of a gang of London swindlers. As in the *Times* case, an action for libel followed, resulting in a verdict for the defendants and the complete establishment of their good faith. The trading classes of Manchester were, however, less grateful than those of London. A large sum was raised for the purpose of presenting a testimonial to the proprietors of the *Times*; but nothing of the kind was attempted in Cottonopolis, although there could be no question of the benefit which had accrued to the town from the spirited action of the local journal. Against this case many others may, however, be set which plainly prove that as a rule the public are not ungrateful for the benefits conferred by the newspaper press. Not very long ago a newspaper in the north of England was saddled with the payment of heavy costs in a somewhat singular manner. At a meeting of the town-council or some similar body a speech was made by one of the members strongly reflecting upon the character of another member who was not then in his place. The local journal published its usual report, and afterwards inserted a denial of the charges by the person attacked. He was not satisfied with this vindication, and brought his action, not against the speaker of the libellous words, but against the proprietor of the newspaper which reported them. Notwithstanding the favourable summing-up of the judge who tried the case, a verdict with 5*l.* damages was returned for the plaintiff, thus leaving the whole costs of the action to be borne by the unfortunate proprietor. Happily his friends and fellow-townsmen made a subscription for him, and col-

lected a sum sufficient to reimburse him for the expenses to which he had been put. Had not this been done, however, the proprietor would not have "bled" in vain. The flagrancy of the case attracted public attention, and last session a bill was brought into Parliament to correct this anomalous legislation. By this measure the responsibility for libellous statements uttered at a public meeting is transferred from the newspaper which reports them to the speaker who utters them, provided only that the report be *bonâ fide*, and that a refutation of the slander be inserted in a position at least as conspicuous as that occupied by the attack. The bill having passed in spite of the opposition of the *Saturday Review*, the last restraint upon the press is removed; but to judge by the experience of the past the increase of liberty is not likely to be followed by any evil results. Hitherto, as restrictions have been withdrawn, the tone of British journalism has improved, and there is no reason to suppose that this case will be any exception.

One of the most curious features in connection with the newspaper press of the provinces is the extent to which the principle of coöperation has been worked. Besides the regularly-acknowledged newspapers of old standing and real influence in the districts in which they circulate, there are hundreds of little local news-sheets, published in market-towns and even in villages, which, except for their purely local matter, are in all respects absolutely identical. They are supplied by a well-known firm in London by contract, the arrangement being that while the publisher on the spot shall get together his local news and advertisements, the London firm prepare and print one, two, or three pages of "general matter." The sheets thus partially printed are sent down by rail, and the local printer, immediately on receipt of them, proceeds to fill up the blank space with the matter which he and his *aides* have been engaged in preparing. Thus the "general matter" of the *Mudborough Gazette* is letter for letter the same as the "general matter" of the *Ealansivill Guardian*. It is scarcely necessary to add that the part which is prepared in London is of much the same quality as that prepared in the country, and that neither is such as to entitle the journal to a position in the list of newspapers properly so called. The principal reason for regarding this manufacture with interest is to be found in the celebrity of its inventor. Many years ago Mr. Charles Knight started a magazine in London, which he adapted for provincial circulation in a somewhat similar way. The outer sheet was so arranged that it could be separated from the rest, and its place supplied by a sheet of local matter. This the country bookseller prepared, and having received his supply of inside sheets from London, issued his magazine simultaneously with that published in London. A similar plan was afterwards adopted in connection with the once well-known *Monthly Register of Literature, Science, and Art*, of which Mr. Weldon was the proprietor. Neither of these speculations appear, however, to have been attended with the success which has followed the application of the principle to newspaper work. Another and a better plan has been devised by the

proprietors of a West-of-England journal. They have taken up papers in various parts of the country, at each of which they keep a editor to attend to local matters. At a central office in London prepare the general news, and all such matters as usually come into the province of the editor of a daily paper, such as the leading article and the summaries of foreign and political affairs. The matter thus prepared is stereotyped by a process which allows an indefinite number of plates to be cast from the same mould. A set of these casts, usually comprising from eight to twelve columns, is sent by the evening train to each of the towns in which the proprietors have established journals, and, being made up with the local and district news, in the collection of which the sub-editor has been occupied during the day and evening, the whole forms one journal—identical so far as its general features are concerned with, perhaps, half-a-dozen others, but varied, of course, in regards matters of local interest. Some of the towns about Manchester, and probably in the neighbourhood of other large cities also, adopted a somewhat similar plan. The proprietors of the local papers of the smaller towns having collected their weekly budgets of news, and written a leading article on some local topic, send the lot of manuscript to the office of one of the more important journals in the capital of the district. There it is set up, and the necessary amount of general news having been supplied by the transfer of portions of the type already set up for use in the more important journal, an excellent local paper is produced at a comparatively small expense. If for this plan, or for something similar, it would be impossible for the proprietors of these journals to compete with those London papers which are delivered early every day, or with the daily papers of the great manufacturing towns.

This last-mentioned plan is simply an expansion of the idea first floated by Mr. Jerdan, the well-known founder of the *Literary Gazette* long ago as 1812. In his amusing Autobiography this writer says that it was better and more congenial employment to edit provincial papers in London, which, though absurd as it may seem at first, is just as effective (with a sub-editor on the spot for local news, & if the writer resided at the place of publication; for the political vigilance had to come from town to be handled in the country, and quite as easy and expeditious to have the news and commentaries done down together. . . . Thus I edited the *Sheffield Mercury* for a number of years, and at other times a Birmingham, a Staffordshire Post and an Irish journal (for [the last of] which I never was paid) and others in various parts of the country." This was written some time about 1852, and Jerdan expresses a doubt as to whether the same plan was in operation at that period. It is, however, extremely probable that it was, seeing that several journals of considerable repute in the provinces are now directed entirely from London. One town in the West of England boasts two journals of opposing politics. Both are extremely able papers, and their leading articles would do no dis-

journals of the metropolis. They owe their excellence, however, to the fact that the proprietor of one is a member of parliament, the writer of well-known and highly-appreciated ability, while the editor of the other is a gentleman who is universally regarded as one of the most cultivated and refined advocates of the political principles which he professes.

It must not be supposed that all these pains are taken simply for the sake of the pecuniary return. Of the total number of newspapers published in the provinces it would be speaking within bounds if we said that one-fourth do not pay their expenses, and that of the rest, one-half only do so by means of their advertisements. These are in good years a great source of revenue to the provincial as well as the metropolitan press. It is true that of late their number and influence have fallen off very considerably, chiefly on account of the cessation of the fever for "limited liability" undertakings. This deficiency has crippled the proprietors of many struggling journals, but it seems to have had little effect on the old-established and more trustworthy ones.

With the revival of trade from the shock of the panic of last year, change may be expected, and we may again see the provincial press profitable to the proprietors as heretofore. In the mean time, however, the same conditions are carried on quite as much for the sake of political influence as from any eagerness after money. More than one member of parliament has an interest in the papers which circulate amongst his constituents, and in many more cases journals are carried on at a loss, or with a small profit, for the purpose of advocating some particular set of principles. In any case, however, it is always the interest of the proprietor to give good value to their subscribers, seeing that with so much choice as they have before them in most cases, the ill-managed and less well-edited newspaper has no chance of success. Hence, whatever motive with which the journals of the provinces are carried on, the few amongst them which are absolutely bad. We may even say, as a whole, England has reason to be proud of the tone of its journalism, in the country as well as in town. Scurrility, personality, and violent attacks upon public men are exceedingly rare. Dulness happens impossible to avoid on some occasions; but that is, after all, a natural fault. Positive offences against decency and good taste are uncommon; and if by chance they do creep in, they are tolerated to be repudiated by the editors. In the few cases of persistent objectionable course which sometimes occur, the offence is usually to be attacked by the opposition journal—a contingency which has a small influence in preserving a tone of rectitude and good manners. Thus, freed from the irritating restrictions which mark the journalism of the Continent, the English newspaper press is an example of the beneficial effects of liberty.

J. FRANCIS HITCHMAN.

LOST SIGHT OF

A Tale of Corsica

BY ASTLEY H. BALDWIN

IN TWO PARTS :—PART I.

CHAPTER I. CAUGHT IN THE DARKNESS.

TOWARDS the close of the summer of 18—, which had been characterised by extreme drought, a couple of young travellers, attended by a guide, were journeying through the interior of Corsica on their way towards Ajaccio.

The day had been exceedingly hot, for it was the end of August, but the sun was now beginning to decline, and the stifling sensation so often occasioned in this island by the effects of his rays upon the vegetable matter collected in the beds of the dried-up streams which abound here, had become exchanged for that peculiarly grateful and mellow influence which pervades the atmosphere in nearly all climes towards the evening of a sultry day.

The companions were mounted on two of the stout-hearted and sure-footed horses so useful in a country which is mountainous and stony throughout, and where forest and rock alternate in endless succession. The underwood, too, was excessively dangerous from the numerous stumps of felled trees which here and there protruded a few inches from the ground. The country through which the travellers were passing was plentifully studded with these, and more than once they were obliged to halt in consequence. They had ascended a very mountainous path which lay in their direct way, and were now descending the other side of the mountain towards a small hostelry which their guide informed them was but two miles distant, and would be a suitable place of rest for the night.

Both travellers were French. The elder, who might have been about six-and-twenty, was a small lithe wiry man with bright dark eyes and complexion, and of exceedingly vivacious manners; whilst his companion, who was perhaps three years younger, was of a somewhat taller and more powerful build, and rather reserved than otherwise in demeanour. He was the son of a Paris merchant, and was simply journeying for the pleasure of accompanying his friend, Adolphe Dufour. The younger man was called Jules Previn.

M. Dufour was journeying on a business of some importance. He was the only son of a widow lady of property, who, either from incli-

otherwise, had taken up her residence at Ajaccio, whilst her n, who could not endure the dull wildness of Corsica, spent the part of the year in a place which had far greater charms for him, Paris. Madame Dufour had also one daughter, Celeste—who come of age, and was on the point of marriage with a Corsican er of some substance. Adolphe's journey was taken with a purpose—that of being present at the wedding, and also of with him his sister's dower, a considerable sum to which she entitled on attaining her majority; according to the laws of twenty-five, and not twenty-one, years of age.

he friends and their guide slowly descended the defile, an idea o strike the lively little Adolphe, who suddenly exclaimed, n ami, we have heard much of Corsican hospitality, why should billet ourselves upon some farm-house, instead of a nasty little ? bah !”

,” said his more reserved friend, “let us at least seek shelter y payment we are entitled to whatever we require. Obli—

ligations? chut ! who ever heard of *obligations* in Corsica? Why, aveller here is received open-armed; and then the important t present hold—it would be safer.” Previn frowned, and cast ance at the guide.

ie ; ah well, as you will,” continued the volatile Dufour; “let us for the hostelry.”

d besides, signor,” interposed the guide, “there is no farm-o private dwelling within some miles of here.”

farm-house? ah bah ! then that settles the matter.”

r rode, or rather stumbled on for a few moments in silence, as broken by Previn, who addressed himself to their guide.

e you a Corsican ?”

guide appeared a little confused.

, signor, I am a Neapolitan; but my mother was Corsican, and son who now keeps the hostelry La Rouge-gorge.”

at, yourself ?”

, no, signor, my brother, that is to say, my half-brother—he is er's son by her first husband.”

I understand.”

d,” interposed Adolphe, “you wished, I suppose, to recommend ur relatives, by way of sending a little grist to their mill?”

y, signor, a poor aubergiste must live, and—”

I do not quarrel with your fraternal regard, my friend ; not at at all.”

Rouge-gorge—the Redbreast,” exclaimed Dufour cheerily ; hope he will pipe us his best welcome.”

e name has another strange significance,” muttered Previn in an ie to his friend.

"Ah, pooh ! mon ami, what gloomy ideas, and in Corsica too, where they so well understand the parable of the Good Samaritan ! To hesitate would appear cowardly, et je suis Français, moi !" and he drew himself up proudly, with an emphasis on the word *moi* impossible to describe.

Previn took this as a reproof, and said no more, but he felt far from comfortable; nor could his companion altogether succeed in rallying his spirits.

It was indeed a gloomy, though picturesque, part of the island. On either side of the prospect precipitous mountain ascents rose frowning, till in the darkness they almost appeared to touch the clouds. Round and about the travellers were scattered thousands of heavy, dismal-looking clumps of pine and cypress, intermingled with laurel and the evergreen oak. Of all trees, with the exception perhaps of cedar and yew, none give so gloomy-looking an appearance to the phases of a landscape as the cypress and the pine, which here seemed to form the boundary of some sombre resting-place for the dead. Their black were their outlines that they appeared to stand out against the darkness, clearly defined; as a piece of black *velvet* would show dark on a ground of black *silk*. Night too came on as with seven-league boots, till the obscurity might almost be said, like that which forms one of the plagues of Egypt, to be a darkness that "could be felt."

Neither Dufour nor Previn could longer conceal their uneasiness. They exclaimed simultaneously,

"But, Caravarri" (this was the name of the guide), "are we really near your brother's house?"

"Sì, signori, but a quarter of a mile. I can discern the outline of the auberge."

"I can see nothing but these gloomy trees," said Dufour; and he could not avoid a shudder; for the scene was far from congenial to the mercurial temperament of the warm-hearted little Frenchman.

"I can rather *feel* them than see them," rejoined his friend.

"What was that noise?"

"Only my mare, signor. She stumbled over one of these accursed stumps.—Coraggio, Giuglia, the stable is near!"

"I wish with all my heart it were reached," returned Dufour, whose horse also came nearly down with his rider.

"It is here, signor," said the guide, pointing with his finger in direction a couple of hundred yards a-head, where at last a glimmer of light was discernible; "those are the windows of my good brother's inn."

"Well, the saints be praised!" interposed Dufour. The other traveller said nothing, but breathed a deep sigh of relief.

It was a long, low, and not very comfortable-looking house which they now approached; but the weary friends were only too well satisfied to reach any sort of haven, and were therefore not inclined to be particular as to its appearance. Just, however, as they turned

into a sort of rude path which formed the approach to the inn, the horse on which Previn was seated stumbled and threw his rider violently. The traveller uttered a cry of pain, and then all was still.

"Santa Maria!" ejaculated the guide, "the poor gentleman is killed!"

"He is much hurt; God grant the accident may not be serious!" replied Dufour with considerable agitation, for he was greatly attached to his companion.

Adolphe and the guide then dismounted very carefully, for it was pitch dark. They advanced towards the prostrate Jules, who, they found, was only stunned. Cautiously bearing the insensible man between them, the pair then advanced to the door of the hostelry, the horses (sagacious animals as they were) following of themselves. At the low-built door of the house there stood a middle-aged man, who from his appearance was evidently the aubergiste. He was stoutly built, he had a slight stoop in his broad shoulders, which gave him a somewhat ungainly gait. His beard was grizzled, his complexion swarthy, and his eyes black and piercing, like those of his half-brother the guide.

"Annetta, anima mia!" he cried out—and the expression sounded strangely from such lips—"come hither with a light. The good saints have blown some customers to our door."

A woman speedily appeared in obedience to this summons; she carried a feeble light, and advanced with a hurried and uneasy step. Few would have supposed that a creature of such surpassing beauty could have been the wife of so unattractive a husband. Yet such was the fact. She was a lovely young woman of not more than twenty, of the true Scandinavian type—blue eyes, golden hair, and faultless complexion. She was the daughter of a Danish fisherman whom the aubergiste Coletti had encountered in some of his wanderings, and her real name was not Annetta but Brenda, although it pleased her husband to give her the first-named Italian appellation. By that extraordinary attraction which so often brings persons of opposite age, appearance, disposition, and complexion together, had this beautiful Danish girl been drawn towards a man who had few attributes to recommend him to a gentle girl. Strange as it may appear, she loved him, although her affection was mingled with a shrinking awe of him, peculiarly distressing to witness. In fact she was completely under his influence, which knowledge Coletti did not scruple to turn to his own account.

"Sì, Carlo," she said in answer to a request, or rather a command, to show the way to the best apartment; and forthwith Dufour and the guide Caravarri deposited the injured man upon a couch in the room to which they were conducted by the hostess. She herself took apparently a very great interest in bringing the stranger round, and the continued exertions of the party were after a while successful. Previn's injuries proved to be no worse than a contused face and a sprained

ankle; which last, of course, precluded the hope of his being able to resume the journey on the morrow. This reflection caused much chagrin to both Dufour and himself, as it would prevent his being present at the marriage, which was arranged to take place on the next day but one.

"However," said Dufour, "we will think of that after a night's rest, mon ami.—And now, madame," he added, turning to Annetta, "we can, I suppose, have some supper in this room before retiring?"

"O, certainly, signor; and we have excellent beds; we do not, it is true, have many travellers here, but I keep them well aired. It was our brother Caravarrì who recommended you to rest here, I presume, signor?" she added, but was checked by a frowning look from her husband and also from the guide, who both sharply bid her prepare the supper for the "signori." The two men then withdrew; the guide muttering that he would see after the horses, and bring in the gentlemen's valises.

Annetta looked after them with a puzzled expression, then curtsied to Dufour. She lingered for a few moments to arrange the scanty furniture of the room, and murmured apologetically, "The signori will excuse my chattering. I have so little company in this dull place. It is not like dear sociable Denmark; ah, not at all!" She sighed, dropped another curtsy, and withdrew.

Adolphe looked surprised, and regarded her as she passed out with a feeling of indefinable interest and compassion. He had remarked the conduct of both host and guide, and had, when they interchanged glances, felt within himself a certain uneasiness for which he could not account.

"After all," he thought, "I am foolish, and over-excited by fatigue. Corsican hospitality is proverbial, and no doubt the abruptness of those two men was only masculine impatience of a woman's weakness." Then turning to Previn he inquired how he felt. The latter had not as yet spoken. He had lain quietly on his couch, taking no notice of everything that had occurred. He roused himself with an effort, his friend spoke, and endeavoured to put a cheerful face upon matters though evidently in pain.

"O," he said, "I am all right. I shall accompany you to-morrow to Ajaccio, come what may."

"Nonsense, my dear fellow, you cannot ride. You must wait till I get there, and send back a vehicle to fetch you, which I will do at once. You cannot put foot in stirrup, and there are no vehicles to be had here."

"I suppose it must be so, Adolphe. But I candidly own I neither like the prospect of remaining here, nor of allowing you to proceed alone."

"*Fi donc!* courage, dear Jules! And why, I pray, should you fear on either account?"



V. J. Skill, del.

ANNETTA.

W. A. Cranston.



it is precisely what I cannot tell. I scarcely feel it reasonable, I have an instinctive terror—"

instinctive terror of what? Dear friend, it is pain makes you," said Dufour, who was evidently somewhat troubled by his son's vague terrors, but who tried to persuade himself that he in were a couple of poltroons.

inly, Dufour, I do not like that Caravarri."

: I. But what harm can he do us? It is not *his* house."

; but there is an understanding between him and our land- at is evident."

ll, what then?"

y, I do not like that same landlord."

is a sullen-looking animal, certainly, and one whose acquaintance no desire to cultivate. But do you think he is one of rible ogres in the shape of landlords who used to figure in old , and that he means to kill and eat us?"

s easy to laugh, Dufour. But you are not on the Boulevard des and you seem to forget that you carry a large sum of money." r started.

so I did. But what signifies that? These men do not know rry it."

guide may have overheard your incautious remark to me. I do not like that guide."

even if he heard me, he was conducting us here before I said about the money."

l, it may be his practice to bring plunder here to his dear ith the grizzled beard. He is like a hyena, that man."

l, Jules, we are in Corsica."

l?"

l, that means our persons are sacred. All Corsicans are e."

none of these people *are* Corsicans."

e, true," murmured Adolphe, rather crestfallen, as he re- d this fact. "But the little woman I will swear is harmless," resently. "Pretty little flower!"

has evidently something on her mind."

really now, Jules," remonstrated Dufour, "that Caravarri was enough to hear our remarks."

do not know the man. These Italians have the eyes of ie ears of hares, and the footsteps of cats."

l, well, nothing can be done now. I will start early in the and you—well, if you will not remain, why we must form a oughs, and hire some stout peasants to carry you. Chut, r supper."

ittle hostess came in herself, carrying a tray, preceded by her *rearing a light.*

"I hope the signori will find the supper good," he said cringingly; "but we were somewhat taken by surprise."

Whilst laying the cloth and making the necessary table arrangements, it was to be observed that the landlord of the Redbreast took good care not to allow the fair-haired Annetta to slip in so much as a word sideways.

When all was ready, he marched out of the room behind her, quite in the fashion of a gaoler who has all his eyes on a prisoner he could by no means allow to escape from his custody.

The supper was far from a bad one. There was a noble cold ham from which but a slice or two had been cut, broiled fowls and vegetables and a dish of roast pigeons and olives. In addition to these there was both white and brown bread, a few spiced biscuits, and two or three light kinds of Southern wines. A piece of hung beef garnished with cypress-leaves stood on a side-table, and by its side, like some stalwart consort, was a large cheese, from Switzerland, probably a Gruyère. There was provision indeed for a band of stout English or Dutch foreigners, instead of only two slightly-built young Frenchmen.

The two friends made a hearty meal, for Previn's sprained foot by no means had the effect of crippling his appetite. Both were too weary to talk much; and as soon as their supper was concluded, they agreed to go to bed. The landlord and Adolphe carried Previn to his apartment, after which Dufour retired to his own, to which all the packages of both himself and his friend had been by his orders conveyed. Amongst these was a small valise of chamois leather, containing, with other things, the dowry of his sister, a portion of which was in gold (French Napoleons and Spanish doubloons),—heavy and inconvenient no doubt, but indispensable, since bank-notes were that period not easily changed in Corsica. This valise the lively little Frenchman, for better security, deposited beneath his head; and, having commended himself to heaven, was soon wrapped in that profound dreamless slumber which is the privilege of a light heart and a clear conscience.

The silence of night, black, still, and impenetrable, was on all within and without the house.

CHAPTER II.

MISSING.

It was eight o'clock on a most glorious summer morning. The sun, which had already attained considerable power, cast a golden glow over the dark-green masses of cypress and pine which surrounded the hostelry of the Rouge-gorge; and the perfume of blossoms was borne on a light breeze through the open windows. Annetta Coletti had long since risen, and had already got her household work forward. By nature she was blithe as a wren, and, like that pretty and diminutive creature, would have skipped and carolled, and carolled and skipped, working

the while with a charming pretence of being exceedingly busy. But her natural gaiety of heart was checked by her consciousness of the near proximity of her lord and master's frowning countenance. On this particular morning she appeared rather more cheerful than usual, and was singing gaily as she laid the cloth for the breakfast of the "signori." But in the midst of her song a heavy step sounded in the passage behind her, and turning round with a frightened gesture, she saw her amiable husband standing on the threshold of the apartment.

"Carissima," he said, "you will have the goodness, my angel, to stop that shrill caterwauling, if you please. I am surprised at you, and the sick signor not yet awake."

"O pardon, Carlo," said the poor little woman, "I had forgotten—"

"Forgotten!—yes, you are always forgetting."

"Carlo," rejoined his wife caressingly, "I did not think there was any harm in my poor song, and I did not sing so *very* loud. It is so dull in these eternal cypress forests after the bright cheerful frosts and sparkling days of the North—"

"Saints in heaven, is there anything under the sky can stay a woman's tongue!"

"Why, I did but say—"

"Say? Yes, you are quite a poetess, *you*," he said sneeringly; "with your 'sparkling frosts,' and 'blue skies,' and 'glittering Danish caves,' and your nonsense;—and wherefore are you laying knives and forks for a regiment, I would like to know?"

"Why, I have laid but for two, Carlo," she rejoined, with an air of surprise.

"Two! but why, may I ask, does one man require double accommodation?"

"*One* man? Why, Carlo, are you asleep? There are two signori here."

"O, there are two signori here, are there?" retorted Coletti, mimicking her accent; "but I say there is but *one*, mistress. There *now*!"

"But, Carlo, how could that sick gentleman move without assistance?"

"That sick gentleman,' as you call him, lies asleep upstairs."

"Where, then, is the kind little laughing signor?"

"The kind little laughing signor is a league or two on his way from here to Ajaccio, for which he set off before you were awake—lazy hussy that you are!"

"Why, Carlo, I was about at five o'clock; and I saw no one leave the house."

"Very likely not, since the signor went at four."

"O, impossible!"

"And why *impossible*, I would ask you?" said Coletti, with such a

furious look, that his poor frightened wife was almost terrified into fainting. "Why impossible?"

"I did not mean *impossible*, Carlo," said Annetta tremblingly. "I meant why did the signor go alone?"

"He did *not* go alone. Caravarri went with him."

"Ah, Caravarri!"

"Yes, Caravarri. And what have you to say against it? Did *not* the signor want a guide?"

"Yes, certainly; but then to leave his friend—"

"Fool that you are! He will send a conveyance for his friend. How could he go on horseback with his sprained foot? Do you *not* see that the sooner the gay young signor makes Ajaccio, the sooner *can* he send for his friend?"

"Ah, yes, that is true," returned Annetta, very much relieved.

"Very well then, little foolish one," responded Coletti, almost fawningly, "remove that second knife and fork, and I will awaken the sick signor;" and he kissed his wife, roughly, as he passed her.

She was scarcely at ease, however; and the caress seemed to her—she knew not why—like that of a Judas.

Coletti went immediately to the chamber of Jules Previn, and knocked lightly on the panel of the door.

"Come in," cried the young man, supposing that it was his friend Dufour who knocked.

The host entered.

"O," said Previn with an air of great surprise, "is it you, master? Why, I thought it was my comrade who knocked. Is he not up?"

"The signor will be surprised perhaps, but the other little gentleman is gone."

"Gone!"

"Yes, signor. As I understood him, he had so arranged with you to do, in order that he might send for you from Ajaccio."

"Ah, yes, that is partly true; but, at least, why did he not bid me adieu?"

"Signor, I suggested it; but it was only four o'clock. You were, as far as we could tell, sleeping soundly; and your friend would not have you disturbed."

"What! he went at four?"

"Si. The morning was fine, and it was a pity not to take advantage of it."

"But he is so sound a sleeper."

"Indeed, signor, he was wakeful this morning, and it was he himself who aroused us."

"But he could not go alone?"

"Caravarri, your guide of last evening, accompanied him, signor, with the baggage."

"The baggage?"

"Certainly, signor. You know that your own and your friend's baggage were, at his express desire, deposited in his sleeping apartment."

"But why take mine? I may require it."

"Why, signor, perdona; but it appears to me that that was to save you the trouble of looking after it."

"But I may require it, I say."

"How so, signor? Your conveyance will be here at noon."

"How far, then, is it to Ajaccio?"

"It is a round-about route, and may be sixteen miles."

"O, that is all? Well, then, M. Dufour—"

"Pardon," said Coletti, turning very pale, "but whom did you say?"

"Why, my friend M. Dufour, my fellow-traveller."

"Gran Dio!"

"At what are you astonished? Is that strange?"

"Signor, at Ajaccio resides a widow lady of that name, in whose service I have been some years back."

"Well, that is my friend's mother."

"Santa Maria!" But recovering himself, Coletti added: "I am surprised, signor; that is all. I supposed you to be two unknown French gentlemen, and I find one of you the son of an old patroness. It appeals to my feelings."

Previn said to himself: "Ah, this looks strange. This man is surely not one to give way to sentimental feelings." However, he said presently:

"Yes, yes, very natural. There will be much rejoicing at Ajaccio when my friend arrives."

"Rejoicing?"

"Certainly; why not? He and his family are respected and beloved, and it is the occasion of his sister's wedding."

"O, O!" groaned the host.

"My friend, you are strangely moved."

"At the thoughts of my patroness's happiness, signor. We Italians are impulsive. But if M. Dufour be the son of my former mistress, how is it I am not acquainted with him? for Ajaccio is not so far off but what some of Madame's establishment are known to us."

"Ah, but M. Dufour resides in Paris. The dullness of this island does not suit his tastes. He is here but once a year."

"He resided in Paris, did he?"

"Resided—*dùl* he? What do you mean?"

"Does reside, I meant, signor," stammered Coletti.

"Of course. Well, help me to rise, will you?"

"The signor's breakfast is prepared; and I and Antonio (this was a stable-helper) will carry him down-stairs when he is ready," responded Coletti, whose hand shook so that he could hardly assist Jules to put on his clothes.

In due time, however, the toilet was made, and Previn was carried down to the breakfast-room.

The repast was, as before, good and plentiful. Loaves of white and brown bread, broiled ham, fresh eggs, preserved oranges, and chocolate constituted the fare ; and Jules, in spite of vague apprehensions which he could not conceal entirely from himself, made an excellent meal, at the conclusion of which he asked for a glass of water.

The landlord brought it, saying, " Pardon, signor, that the water is not of first-rate quality, but most of our mountain streams are dried up by the summer heat, and even our well itself is dry and choked up with rubbish."

" Whence, then, did this water come? It is certainly rather brackish."

" From one of the deeper of our streams, signor, which is not entirely dry, but has yet some water left in its channel, muddy it must be confessed, but it is the best we can get."

" You need make no apologies. Your fare is excellent, and travellers must put up with some drawbacks. Have you anything you can give me to read, by the way, to beguile the time until the conveyance comes for me ?"

A spasm passed across Coletti's face, but he replied, " I do not read, signor ; but there are, I believe, some old books upstairs left by a former proprietor of the house. I will send my wife to look for them, and she shall bring them to you if you have finished breakfast."

" Thanks, friend, I shall be glad of them whatever they may be ; I have quite finished."

In a few minutes Annetta made her appearance with a couple of musty old volumes. She courtesied and paid the usual morning compliments to her guest, yet with an expression so obviously troubled, that Previn, like his companion on the previous night, could not avoid feeling for her a sort of compassion.

" I fear the signor will find these somewhat dull, but my husband has no others. He does not read, and he says I have no leisure to waste on books."

" O, never mind ; it is ten o'clock now, and I have but a couple of hours to wait, since I expect to go away at twelve. The books will at least serve to occupy that time."

Annetta laid the volumes on a small table near the window, and having cleared away the remains of the meal left Previn alone.

He dragged himself to an old carved stool near the table and took up one of the volumes. " Legends of the Robbers of the Rhine," he read, and with a kind of wondering interest he began to peruse the story at which the volume had opened. Gradually he became absorbed in its contents.

It was a story of some travellers who had been drugged and murdered at an inn by some banditti, with whom the proprietor of the *hostelry* was in league : and Previn shuddered, as he could not help

fancying the description of the hostelry would have applied very well to the Rouge-gorge itself.

"Pshaw!" he muttered to himself, "what foolish nonsense! This is a story of the Black Forest, and I am in Corsica. How morbid pain makes a man!"

He completed the story, and then read another, and yet another.

Thus two hours passed away.

Suddenly he roused himself, and looked at his watch. The hands pointed to half-past twelve!

"Well," he thought, "the roads are very bad, if indeed they can be called roads at all; and one must allow something for delay."

Again, he applied himself to his book, trying to interest himself in those familiar legends, rather than abandon himself to his gloomy thoughts.

Thus more than another hour passed away.

Two o'clock!

Previn could not move from his seat, so he called aloud for the host. But there was no answer.

Then he redoubled his cries, and presently Annetta appeared nervously trembling.

"Signor!"

"Why, it is two o'clock; the conveyance should have arrived two hours ago. Send your husband to me directly."

"But he is not in, signor."

"Not in! Where, then, is he?"

"I do not know, signor; but he told me to see to all that you required, and—"

"What *does* all this mean?"

"Perhaps," suggested the poor woman tearfully, "my husband is alarmed at the non-arrival of the carriage for the signor, and has gone to meet it."

"Perhaps," said Previn, doubtfully. He looked searchingly at his hostess, but poor Annetta was evidently as completely mystified as himself.

Then he bethought himself that it might be wise to try to win her confidence.

"You are not happy?" he said.

Annetta burst into tears.

"I am not, signor! all is so dark here, so mysterious, so different from my dear Denmark. O, if I had but known—but," she added, breaking off suddenly and looking fearfully around her, "Carlo would kill me if he heard me speak thus."

"Is he not kind to you, then?"

"Yes—N—o, signor," stammered the unlucky young woman.

"Well?"

"He goes out for hours, I know not where, and he comes back

sometimes sullen and pale. Then if I speak, or if I appear to wish to be cheerful, he scowls at me, and sometimes—sometimes—”

“Well, sometimes?”

“Sometimes he beats me.”

“Beats you!” said Previn indignantly.

“Si, signor,” and Annetta coloured violently.

“O the coward! But now tell me all you know. Did you see my friend depart this morning with Caravarri?”

“Signor, my husband says—”

“Never mind that. Did you see him yourself?”

“Not so, signor. I was not yet awake.”

“So that you cannot undertake to say if a message was left for me by M. Dufour?”

“M. Dufour!” almost screamed Annetta; “ah, cielo!”

“Well, what is the matter, why should the name of my friend so affect both you and your husband?”

“Did it affect my husband, signor?”

“Yes it did,” responded Previn; “and why should it affect you also, pray? Tell me at once.”

“Signor, I will. My husband said twice aloud this morning, ‘Ah, if I had known he had been the son of Madame!’ ‘Madame’ is what my husband always called the lady in whose service he lived at Ajaccio, so that I knew he meant Madame Dufour. Consequently, signor, when you mentioned the name of your friend the little laughing gentleman, I understood that it was to him my husband referred when he exclaimed to himself.”

“But why did your husband make that exclamation?”

“Indeed, signor, I cannot imagine.”

Previn again looked searchingly at the young woman, but he saw truth written on her face. It was quite impossible to doubt her.

“Madame Coletti,” he said, anxiously, “you must do all that I desire, or it will be the worse for you and your husband.”

“O, I will—I will, signor!”

“I believe you. I must leave here immediately.”

“Immediately?”

“Certainly. Do you think I can wait here in this state of anxiety?”

“But the signor will at least wait till my husband returns?”

“No.”

“But you cannot ride, signor; and we have no vehicle.”

“I can be carried.”

“But, signor—”

“Will you do as I bid you?”

“Yes, yes, signor, per Maria—yes! for I too am anxious about the little laughing gentleman.”

“Then send me four of your stoutest peasants. I know you can find as many, for I saw half a dozen helping with the horses last night.”

"Si, signor."

"They shall be well paid."

"Si, signor."

"Send them at once."

"Si, signor."

And Annetta withdrew, evidently in earnest.

Presently she returned with four stout young fellows—hangers-on the Ronge-gorge, who entered in sheepish fashion. But though a little abashed, they had none of the stolid idiocy which is unfortunately a characteristic of our English rustic boobies. On the contrary, they soon recovered their self-possession.

Previn addressed them: "Can I trust you to carry me to Ajaccio? I see I am crippled."

"Si, signor," cried the four.

"Well, will you undertake it?"

"Si, signor," chorused the quartette again.

"Good. You shall be well paid."

Four pairs of eyes brightened amazingly at this; for Corsicans and Italians are not slow to worship the almighty "king dollar," and gild gold, wherever it may be spent, is usually deemed a panacea for most evils.

"It will be a long journey, signor," said the spokesman of the four.

"I am prepared for that."

"It will take many hours."

Previn sighed. "I know it, but I will not stay longer here, and we must fall in with some vehicle on the way."

"With your leave we will set to work at once, then, signor," replied the spokesman. And the four departed.

Proceeding to the wood at the back of the hostelry they cut down the largest and strongest boughs procurable, which they constructed deftly and neatly into a species of cradle-litter, binding the ends together firmly with pieces of rope supplied by Madame Coletti. Previn sat light, and easily to be carried by four stout young Corsicans, especially as there was a prospect of a plentiful reward.

In about half an hour the litter was prepared. Jules took leave of the recompensed Madame Coletti; was placed in his extemporised cage, and with an umbrella held up to keep off the sun, and a mind full of disquieting thoughts, set out for Ajaccio.

"Ah," sobbed poor Annetta, looking after the four stalwart bearers of the litter as their figures receded from her view; "the two gentle-ones—each gone *alone*—my husband not to be found! My poor husband is in a whirl—what does all this mean?"

And the luckless woman returned to the kitchen of the Ronge-gorge, from which all life seemed to have departed.

It was as silent in the still summer air as the portals of the grave.

CHAPTER III.

AT FAULT.

ON the evening of the day on which Jules Previn left the hostelry of the Rouge-gorge for Ajaccio, there was a grand ball given at the house of Madame Dufour. It was the eve of her daughter's wedding. The entertainment had not been put off on account of the non-arrival of Adolphe and his friend, for they were not expected until late; and as the roads in Corsica are not of the best, no uneasiness was created.

The mansion of Madame Dufour was a large but unpretending house on the outskirts of Ajaccio, the approach to the main door lined by a double row of cypress trees, which gave somewhat of a gloomy appearance to the view, especially by night. But the sombre aspect of the mansion was fully compensated for by the cheerfulness and high-bred hilarity which reigned within its hospitable walls. Madame Dufour, in truth, and her daughter Celeste, were thorough ladies of the *ancien régime*. The elder, when her children were yet young, had removed to Corsica from Paris whilst the great Emperor was at the zenith of his career. Having strong anti-Napoleonic tendencies, she had received a gentle hint to withdraw from the court of the Tuileries; and it was rather remarkable that she should have selected for her retreat the birthplace of the Emperor. Waterloo, however, had afterwards been fought, peace again prevailed on the Continent, and Madame Dufour had long since been forgotten by Parisian friends and foes of all shades of politics. Her high birth, however, her amiable qualities, and, above all, her polished manners and good heart, had drawn around her a large circle of the best society of the island, amongst whom she was a queen. The house was brilliantly illuminated, the staircases and reception-chambers profusely adorned with flowers, and nothing was wanting to complete the festive appearance of the scene. As the guests began to arrive, Madame Dufour descended the chief staircase, with her daughter on her arm.

This is a photograph of the pair.

The elder lady was of a dignified presence, and more than usually tall. She might be somewhat under fifty years of age, although her powdered hair, dressed in the fashion which had prevailed in her youth, gave her an older appearance. Her features were slightly aquiline, but noble in the extreme; and with their sweet, calm expression was mingled a becoming touch of *hauteur*, strongly reminding one of Delaroche's picture of the unfortunate Queen Marie Antoinette. As in the queen, so in Madame Dufour, this trait was but the natural consciousness of nobility of birth and mind. True nobility, in short. This lady was attired simply and richly in a dark-blue silk dress trimmed with black lace. She wore no ornaments save a few diamonds

in bloom.

Celeste, the daughter of this incomparable woman, had not the high-bred dignity of her mother; and she had passed that first period of girlhood in which artlessness is accepted by the world as a substitute for the dignified demeanour natural to all true ladies. She had lost the claim to be considered a human rosebud, whilst she had not yet acquired a title to the majesty of the full-blown rose, which so grandly became her mother. But she was a charming personage nevertheless; and if she was not outwardly so beautiful as the elder lady, she yet bid fair in inward graces to prove no inapt pupil of a mother who was high-minded even amongst the high-minded. The younger lady did not affect that girlish abandon in dress assumed by some damsels, who at five-and-twenty wish to retain the infantine graces of sweet seventeen. Her attire was a rich white silk, with deep flounces of Mechlin lace; and her sole ornament a necklace of pearls.

As the two ladies entered the chief salon, wherein a few guests had already assembled, it is not surprising that all eyes should greet them with glances of undisguised admiration.

Madame Dufour simply and briefly apologised for herself and her daughter, that they had not been present to receive the first-comers. And then she added, with a touch of womanly feeling that went to every heart:

"It was because we expected my dear son before this, or at least thought it probable he might be here early; and we had wished to receive his first greeting in private."

There was a murmur of polite assent from the little gathering.

"Very proper to avoid a scene," said an ancient maiden lady of strong nerves, in an undertone.

M. Leroux, the *fiancé* of Celeste, now advanced to claim her hand for the first dance. The young lady gave her mother a look of inexpressible affection, in which the regrets of the daughter mingled with the hopes of the bride, before she moved away on her conqueror's arm.

"Veni, vidi, vici," might have been the motto of M. Leroux as well as of Julius Cæsar.

He was of high family, French, like the Dufours, and of enormous wealth; in every way an unexceptionable match, as a good many ladies both young and old did not hesitate to let him see they considered. Mademoiselle Dufour, however, had not allowed him to achieve an easy conquest. It would never have done for a Dufour to be won like a grisette! Celeste was not one of those little fish who allow the big whale to open his mouth and swallow them down at a mouthful. M. Leroux was piqued. He had begun to think victory as certain in the softer encounters of the salon, as it was to the Roman conqueror in the matter of arms. But he had received a wholesome lesson. He had been courted for his wealth until it was scarcely *strange if he thought himself invincible*; but with Celeste his wealth

had no power. Would it not have been beneath a Dufour to be influenced by so sordid a consideration? But when a handsome and accomplished man follows a woman like her shadow, her vanity is apt to be touched; and when *that* is touched, the heart soon follows. No fort is impregnable, unless the besiegers are fools or faint-hearted cravens. So the siege was at last raised, and Mademoiselle Dufour surrendered at discretion to the most eligible *parti* in the island of Corsica.

The arrivals grew more and more frequent. The ball-room filled with a throng so brilliant, that one might have fancied oneself in the most fashionable and aristocratic of Parisian salons.

Two hours passed away.

The lovers had joined the dancers, and were whirling round to the strains of an inspiring waltz, when a commotion was heard below. Celeste caught her mother's quiet yet energetic exclamation, "C'est mon fils!" She and M. Leroux disengaged themselves hastily from the other couples, and followed Madame Dufour, who, with a graceful explanation to her guests, had already quitted the salon.

Directed by the voices, Celeste and M. Leroux followed Madame Dufour into a large apartment, wherein a crowd of the household domestics had already assembled. On a table was placed a sort of litter made of boughs strongly tied together; and on this lay a young man, deadly pale, with a face in which physical pain and mental emotion were strongly depicted.

"Dear M. Previn," exclaimed Madame Dufour, "why do you arrive thus?"

"It is a sprained ankle, and I was unable to ride. But as Adolphe did not send—"

"Adolphe, my dear son, and where is he?"

"Is he not here?"

"Here? No, certainly not!"

"Good God! Where then is he?"

"You frighten me, dear M. Previn," cried Madame Dufour, looking greatly alarmed. "What do you mean? Did not Adolphe accompany you?"

Jules groaned in utter prostration of spirit.

"I expected to find him here."

"O, explain," responded the mother, struggling bravely against the terror which the young man's words had inspired.

"Last night we slept—that is, Adolphe and I—at a hostelry about sixteen miles from here, when I unfortunately met with this sprain. We agreed that this morning Adolphe should proceed here, and send a vehicle back for me. Well, this morning when I awoke, the landlord told me that Adolphe, unwilling to disturb me, had come on with a guide and the baggage, and that a carriage would be sent at noon for

me to follow. I waited until two o'clock; but when that hour came, and there were no tidings of Adolphe, I could no longer endure delay. So I had this litter made as you see, and four young men carried me here."

"Adolphe had a guide, then?"

"O, yes."

"He may have lost his way," said M. Leroux.

"That is not likely, since I who set out last have arrived safely, and he had a guide who knows the country."

"He may have fallen in with banditti," again suggested Leroux.

The poor mother could scarcely suppress a shriek of anguish. What might not have been the fate of that beloved son? She stood breathless and speechless, pale as death, gazing from one to another.

Previn groaned. "Yes, he had all the baggage with him, even mine."

"O," shrieked poor Celeste; "my miserable dower! If through that my poor brother should have lost his life!"

"Courage, my child," said Madame Dufour, who had recovered her calmness with a heroic effort. "All is not lost yet. We have money and friends who will help us to search for my missing son."

"Yes, yes," cried a dozen voices, "yes, madame."

Madame Dufour, much moved, continued: "But your wedding must be deferred, dear girl."

"O, of course," came from the lips of both Celeste and Leroux.

"Well, let us act at once. Tell me, M. Previn, did the landlord of this inn appear uneasy when no carriage came for you?"

"I did not see him, madame, after eight o'clock. He had gone out."

"Gone out!"

"Yes; and there was no one but his wife from whom I could obtain the smallest information."

"And she?"

"O, she is a pretty young woman, who is evidently very much afraid of her husband; and she could tell me nothing, except that her husband was gone out. Then she suggested it was to meet my conveyance."

"Ah, she suggested that?"

"Yes; and I own it struck me as not impossible."

"But then you must have met this landlord on the way as you came."

"No, madame; we passed nobody at all."

"What is his name?"

"Coletti."

"Coletti. O, I had a servant of that name."

"Yes, madame, it is the same."

"Ah, he told you. Then he will find Adolphe; he was rough, but not *unfaithful*, and—"

"Madame, he did not know my companion was your son."

"Not know it?"

"No. He even appeared distressed when he found it out from me this morning."

"But why should he be distressed?"

"Ah, I know not. That is what puzzles me. If he knew Adolphe had set out safely—"

"If? O," cried Madame Dufour in agony, "you put frightful thoughts into my head. You almost assume that this Coletti knew that some harm had befallen my dear boy."

"Alas, alas, I confess that is my fear, dear madame Dufour. God grant it may prove groundless. But, tell me, what character did this man bear when he was in your service?"

"Indifferent. Yet I know of no serious charge against him; and he was faithful in his way."

"For what, then, did he leave you?"

"He wished to leave my service; and I had detected him in petty thefts, which made me not care about retaining him."

"Thefts?"

"Yes; but ideas on this point are very lax with the lower orders of the south, and he is a Neapolitan."

"But what has been his character since he left you?"

"I cannot say, though I have heard he had fallen into bad company. But I would not condemn any one, not even the worst, on hearsay," added Madame Dufour proudly, with a noble accent, forgetting for an instant her grief.

After a few moments Previn said: "Madame, you see I am crippled. O, that I could search with them! What is to be done?"

"To-night, nothing. You must immediately go to rest. My poor boy, wherever he is, is in God's hands; and as it is now nearly midnight, to begin our search before dawn would do no good, and even might endanger other lives. I will take upon myself all arrangements at day-break. I shall not go to bed myself. Celeste dearest, will you see to M. Previn's apartments; they are already prepared. I must at once disperse our guests." And the noble woman could not repress a few natural tears, for her heart was wrung with maternal anguish, and this calm resolution of manner cost her a terrible effort.

The dismay was great among the guests in the ball-room when Madame Dufour entered it and announced with a sorrowful dignity, that, "her son not having arrived with his companion, from whom he had accidentally been separated, she must under such anxious circumstances beg her dear friends to excuse her, and accept her apologies for neglecting their absence. All would be right, she hoped; for misadventures are not uncommon in Corsica, and—"

Nature had her way, and the mother burst into tears.

Indeed it was seen that she was a woman really beloved by

her friends. They crowded around her. Not one pronounced the unmeaning consolations so often offered by acquaintances on such occasions. But there was a silent and even tearful sympathy from every person there, which went to the poor lady's heart. Hands were extended, and quietly grasped. Adieux were made without a word being spoken. Not a man or a woman present but respected the sanctity of that grief. In less time than it has taken to write these lines, this noble woman was left alone.

Alone in the glittering apartments which a few minutes before had resounded with the strains of soft music, with the ripple of low laughter, with the whispered friendlinesses of happy hearts. Perfumes still exhaled from the calyxes of flowers whose bloom was yet unfaded; the lamps still burned. Yet from one noble heart the light of life, of love, of earthly hope had gone out for ever.

COSMETICS

To begin at the beginning, whereat all things should, "cosmetics" is a word derived from the Greek. It is a noun plural, of which the singular means "a beautifier;" but, as every lady knows, the term is one which in its practical application chiefly refers to the beautifying of the already beautiful sex;—chiefly, not wholly, forasmuch as the ugly sex has something to do with cosmetics too. Yea, those finely-pointed moustaches are no more independent of *pâte hongroise* than your pretty *accroche-cœurs* of bandoline, my lady; and as to moustache and whisker-dyes, I really believe that for every lady who dyes her tresses, ten thousand gentlemen dye these facial adornments. Let it never be affirmed, then, that the use of cosmetics is so especially a feminine accomplishment. To reveal a masculine toilet-table secret, I will state that Nature is not always gracious to men in the matter of natural hair tint. Not only are we apt to grow bald and gray prematurely—whereas women almost never grow bald, and rarely till past middle age gray—but the facial hair of men (whiskers, moustache, imperial, full beard, in short whatever shape it may assume) is apt to be endowed by Nature with some disappointing streaks of undesirable colour. If a man's hair be chestnut, his beard and moustache are apt to display a subfuscous hue—a colour ordinarily said to be gingery or foxy, but more nearly resembling the hue of a singed tortoiseshell tom-cat's back. If a man's hair be black, then gray hairs are prone to obtrude themselves, especially on the chin. In short, you will seldom find that the facial hirsutism of a man comes up to the perfect colour of his head-hair; and thus arises in certain cases the desire to improve the tint by cosmetics.

Having placed the topic of cosmetics on its proper basis, apportioning it between ladies and gentlemen, as truth and justice demand, I will dare proceed with the ladylike part of cosmetic science almost exclusively. I will start with the assumption that cosmetics, so they be innocent, are very appropriate for the fair sex, but mostly stupid for men; usually provocative of what their use elicits—contempt. Not always either. To a certain City perruquier, learned in the mystery of hair-dyeing, I am indebted for information which puts the matter of hair- and whisker-dyeing before me in a more genial light than the one in which I had been accustomed to see it. "Sir," said he to me one day, having trimmed my iron-gray hair, "excuse what I'm going to say. The moustache isn't so bad, but the imperial is disgraceful." *It was a strong word, and it startled me.* "Disgraceful—how, sir?"

Colour, sir, not to say gray, but white—*white* !” I knew what the artist was driving at, though like all *friseurs* he went round and round about, like puss round and round about a basin of hot milk. Gradually, and all things considered dexterously, this barber hairdresser enunciated his proposition of dyeing my white imperial; not in those words, but under the covert plea of making me ten years younger. Thereupon arose a wordy contest between him and me, relative to the definition of youth. Should I *feel* ten years younger? should I live ten years longer? Had his *aqua mirabilis*, or had it not, a rejuvenating power as well as a rejuvenating appearance? He failed to convince me, and I straightway launched some words on the absurdity of hair- and whisker-dyes. He dropped the charlatan at once, this City barber. He began to talk like a man. “Look here, sir,” resumed he, having laid down his scissors with defiant fling, and put his arms a-kimbo; if you were a shopman or a clerk, you’d talk different; yes, or a poor waiter. Principals don’t like gray ’airs, sir, let alone white. A shopman or clerk or waiter may be ever so good, but if his ’air ain’t something else nor gray or white” (he emphasised the last word and looked contemptuously at my imperial), “why, then he’s made no account of: he may go and die and rot, and —” Here regard for the conventionalities of society obliges me to leave a hiatus.

Having prepared the ground thus far, I suppose the most proper thing to do would be to go back into ancient records, and therein see what Assyrian and Babylonian and Egyptian ladies did to make themselves more pretty than Nature had made them. Ancient records—shaw! who ever hunts up ancient records now? I used sometimes; now, almost never. Believe me, ladies and gentlemen, the seeking for truth in original sources is too long an affair for these high-pressure times, when everybody finds twice as much to do as there is time to do it in. Do you seriously think I would trouble myself to hunt through Theophrastus, Pliny, and goodness knows how many books besides, to learn the practice and the traditions of cosmetic art amongst ancient-world ladies? No, benevolent readers and benignant public, I will not practise on you such a fraud as this, albeit the *fraus* were *pia*. For the advantage of such as, possessing a conscience less tender than mine, would wish to pass for fellows of deep research in ancient cosmetic lore, let me tell them how to do it. The book of Eugène Rimmel contains a host of historical facts about this art; facts looking as old as though exhumed from a Brixton cavern or the Neander cave, wherein was found the skeleton of a biped in the exact transition stage between man and monkey. Now I might crib from Messrs. Rimmel and Piesse their quotations, and quote Theophrastus and Pliny, and the rest. This is the way ancient authors are studied in these our days. Refreshing my own clouded memory of ancient cosmetics by the admirable little books of Rimmel and Piesse, I come to the conclusion that ancient ladies—mean ancient-world ladies—must have been in narrow circumstances.

If we think of it, they must have been very badly off. Why, they had no soap, to begin with. At this instant I do not exactly know when soap came first to be used for detergent purposes. I do happen to remember that the Romans, up to the time of the Eastern Empire, had no soap for detergent purposes, though they had been in the habit of importing from Gaul a coarse variety of soft-soap which they used as a pomade. Then, again, the ancients had no alcohol; and when we come to think of the hundreds of cosmetics into which alcohol enters, or which are made by the aid of alcohol, this consideration again brings us to conclude that the ancient cosmetic armory must have been weak. Next, let it be remembered that, until America had been discovered, there was no cochineal for the old world, and without cochineal there can be no carmine.

This mention of carmine induces me to inquire, and to seek reply to the following questions: Wherefore should not the general adornment of a lady's dress be held as coming under the designation of cosmetic? Harmonious dress-colouring is a grace, a beautifier—who doubts it? Definitions, however, if pressed to the uttermost, often lead to strange conclusions. I am anxious to strain at the point of bringing the arts of texture-dyeing and calico-printing under the *régime* of cosmetics; and for this I want to explain, albeit collaterally, if need be, how badly off ladies must have been for coloured dress-stuffs before the discovery of America furnished the cochineal and our best dye-woods. Almost the only really fine colour for texture-dyeing the Romans and Byzantine Greeks had was the Tyrian purple. The mode of making and using Tyrian purple is quite well known, only modern dyers do not choose to make and use it. Our modern purples are much more beautiful than any variety of Tyrian purple. In the matter of personal cosmetics there is a certain Oriental practice amongst women which has come down unchangingly from times of remotest antiquity—the practice of laying a black streak of pigment along the edge of the eyelids. By this treatment the eyes are caused to look bigger than they naturally would, and more brilliant withal, because of the picture-frame-like setting. Modern Egyptian women of the higher and middle classes—sometimes lower-class women—almost invariably adopt this practice at the present day, using a black powder they call *kohl*. This custom is alluded to in Jeremiah iv. 30: “Though thou rentest thy face (or thine eyes) with painting, in vain shalt thou make thyself fair.” I am informed by one who knows Hebrew—which I do not—that the original expression used in the quoted passage of Jeremiah is expressive of the use for this eye-painting of the substance black antimony—sulphide of antimony in the language of modern chemistry. This is the very substance of which the Turkish *kohl* is made at the present day. I am indebted to the published work of Mr. Septimus Piesse for the fact that this practice of eyelid-painting is not uncommon amongst modern English ladies. He does not, however, write

against it: such is not his business. If ladies should elect to paint their noses blue, it would be man's duty and pleasure to give way, trying to consider it beautiful. Mr. Piesse, philosopher as he is, or must be—I have not the honour of his acquaintance—instead of reprobating the use of *kohl*—the *kohl* of Egypt and the Orient—treats his lady customers with a more innocent compound than it, made of Indian ink dissolved—or rather suspended—in rose-water. This can be procured of British perfumers, and under the designation *kohl*, though wholly, as to composition, unlike its Oriental substitute.

I think, if the reader permits me, I will curb this rambling discursiveness, and treat the matter in a more regular way. Let us abandon the ancient ladies—ancient-world ladies—to the shades of antiquity which have so long closed over them. *Carpe diem, carpe diem!* What are they to us, or we to them? What boots it for us to know that Sappho was badly off for soap—had, I fear, not a scrap of silk in her wardrobe, but was mostly draped in garbs of wool, either white, or, for Sunday best, dyed dusky scarlet by kermes, a South-European substitute—but a very bad one—for the new-world *coccus cacti*? Shall we linger absurdly over the memory of ladies who ate onions and had no tooth-brushes? The Orient, the Orient—how absurdly people rave about it! what there is in a name, to be sure! Rachel talks about her rare Arabian cosmetics. It has a pretty sound, but I fancy Arabia has very little to do with the things that Rachel uses to make ladies beautiful for ever. The fact is that nearly all the cosmetics now used by civilised people are referable to the creative and extractive power of the chemist's art. If we might number amongst cosmetics the teeming lot of scents and odours—perfumes—then the triumphs of chemistry would be made manifest indeed. Are these things properly cosmetics? Constructively they may be said to be so; at any rate, I shall not hesitate to consider them as appertaining to cosmetics or beauty-givers. "Beauty" is a word that has never been accurately defined, neither have the words "life" and "death," nay nor even the word "poison." Perhaps as good a definition as can be found for cosmetic is "something grateful to the senses." Does not the perception of beauty come through all the senses? Why should vision, seeing, be accepted as the especial beauty-conferring sense? Is there not a beauty and sound in touch, in taste, and smell? The senses all conduce to the perception of beauty. We settle it thus, and we will have it thus, but the doing so extends our ground amazingly. At any rate, we cannot afford to banish all reference to perfumes from any thesis on cosmetics. Oriental perfumers, rare Oriental herbs—what wildness! In sober truth the Orient is not very generous to the perfumer. To France he is indebted for the most delicate scents which vegetables yield, and the chemist makes him others. Strange fellows these chemists are, strange things they work upon, strange things they evolve from what they work upon. Rancid butter, potato-, spirit-oil,

high-smelling cheese, gas-tar—such are amongst the things out of which they extract some delicious perfumes. The Orient, Madame Rachel!—what does the Orient give us in the way of perfume? In Thibet is the musk-deer. He counts for something in the perfumer's art, but not very much. From Persia we get patchouli—who cares about it? from Persia, otto (*attar*) of roses too—that is better. A few things more could be enumerated useful in perfumery art, and of Oriental extraction. Few they are, however, and sink into insignificance in comparison with the delicate odours from French flowers, and those of high cheese, rancid butter, potato-oil, &c. wrought upon by chemists. And, Madame Rachel—talking about Arabian cosmetics—have the Arabians collodion, I wonder? and if they have not, let me tell you that they have not the very best substitute for skin that has yet been known. Madame, the secret may be worth your while to know. By and by you shall have it for nothing.

Writing of collodion—just faintly indicating that, properly used, it is the very best substitute for skin—reminds me that I have been rambling about, and not yet fallen down into order, regularity, or system. To my errant pen, moreover, the suggestion comes that any systematic thesis on cosmetics—to which this paper advances not the remotest claim—might profitably begin with the skin, and discuss to what extent it might be made beautiful under judicious care, simply by bringing it into a good healthy condition. Am I to assume that everybody knows what the skin is—knows all about the skin? I shall assume the contrary. The skin, according to some people's imaginings, is only a sort of tough leather bag for holding the flesh and bones, nerves, vessels, and other things which make up our mortal bodies. Whereupon, according to the views of some people, any sort of liberty may be taken with the skin. It may be painted and varnished and enamelled, they seem to think, and no harm come of it. Every doctor must have met with people—I have with many—who no more dream that a good layer of body-colour will hurt the skin, or organs lying under the skin, or the general constitution, than it would hurt the panel of a door or the plaster of a wall. It is especially desirable that folks in general should get rid of that notion. Really the skin is no mere dead expansion, but a complex surface of organic life. It has little breathing holes, it has transpiration holes, it has glands, all and each with design and purport. The skin soon resents injuries done to it, believe me. It cannot, and will not, be rashly meddled with. Some French veterinarians once upon a time tried the experiment of enclosing a horse in a bag of noxious gas. To be precise, the noxious gas was a mixture of sulphuretted hydrogen with atmospheric air, a mixture too of which the really noxious gas constituted but little. The animal's head was not included in the bag, wherefore none of the air could have been breathed. The horse died nevertheless, poisoned through the skin. In point of fact, the skin has, among others, a breathing func-

tion: it may be regarded as a sort of supplementary lungs. Certain lower animals breathe wholly through the skin, having no lungs whatever; human beings are not thus circumstanced, but yet the breathing function of the skin is important. It is demonstrated to be important in the following way, for instance. Sometimes after large portions of human skin have been destroyed by a severe burn or scald, the patient sinks into profound sleep, and on awakening inflammation of the lungs sets in. He falls into deep sleep because, the breathing function of the skin having been locally destroyed, the lungs have to do extra duty. They have to eliminate more carbon than they did; and should they fail, the presence of accumulated carbon would operate as a narcotic. The sleep proves that the lungs do fail; the lung-inflammation proves that the organism has suffered in vainly attempting to achieve the task of doing double duty.

The skin, hence—on the strength of this evidence, and much more if needed—is not a mere expansion of painter's panel, whereon pigments may be remorselessly daubed. The experiment has never been tried, but I have no doubt of the fact, that a human patient might be killed by dipping him into a bath of collodion, and drawing him out, in such wise that an artificial skin should be the consequence. Nevertheless, upon limited surfaces a film of collodion may be laid, both in the interests of surgery and of beauty. When small abrasions occur, or evil-looking pimples arise, or the marks of smallpox linger, I believe there is no local cosmetic treatment so good as that which consists in depositing a layer of collodion, tinted flesh-colour, on the affected parts.

By this time some readers, I hope, will have begun to acquire notions of skin-cosmetics in advance of notions of things laid on bodily. Some, I hope, will have begun to suspect that, to develop the skin's own latent beauty, no other than the beauty of health, is better than to produce, or aim at producing, an artificial semblance of it. There cannot be a greater mistake than that founded on the assumption that a soft, clear, well-conditioned skin is wholly the result of external treatment. Of course this counts for something, in fact a good deal; but still more nearly affecting the condition of the skin is the state of general health as determined by constitution, or by what we eat, drink, and avoid.

As regards external applications, there are certain coarse people in the world who impute enormous virtue to common yellow or laundry soap when used for toilet purposes. They seem to believe, or affect to believe, that all the perfumer's art, as lavished on the manufacture of delicate toilet-soaps, is art thrown away, or worse—that it conduces to evil. Now the fact is, that yellow laundry soap is just fitted for laundry detergent purposes and none else. It contains an excess of alkali, most injurious to the skin. It holds turpentine and resin *moreover, which cannot be said to have any detergent power, and*

the effect of which is hateful. There are some tastes, says the Spanish proverb, that deserve whipping; and assuredly amongst these the taste that affects to prefer evil-smelling, highly-alkalised yellow soap, for toilet purposes, to mild and elegant toilet-soap, is one.

However excellent any soap may be, it requires good water to bring out its virtues. With hard water no soap will work well, either in the laundry or for the toilet. Everybody knows how superior rain-water is to any other natural water for all purposes but drinking. Even rain-water, however, falls below the excellence of distilled water in these respects. People who have never washed or shaved by the aid of distilled water little understand the luxury of which washing and shaving are susceptible. It is a matter of surprise to me that in these times, when gas is laid on in almost every house of decent pretensions, a continuously-acting apparatus for producing distilled water is not erected. It would be useless to talk to a gas-fitter about this; he would make a costly and an inefficient job of it. Any chemist would furnish a simple scheme, whereby several gallons of distilled water might be yielded daily by an apparatus hardly costing a pound, and the working of which would really cost nothing, inasmuch as the common kitchen or office gaslight might be made to do distillatory duty and illumine as well.

Now, some further words about the skin, one of the chief localisations of human beauty; therefore so needful to be understood by all who care to heed it. The skin, to speak systematically, consists of three layers—the cuticle, rete mucosum, and cutis vera. The cuticle is the outer layer of all. It is wholly devoid of sensation, as many cases prove; the real sensitive nervous expansion lying underneath it. This cuticle invests every part of the true skin as a protective covering. The existence of this cuticle may be demonstrated in various ways. When we gall a finger or toe, we raise a blister, raising the cuticle; a blistering plaster effects the same. The cuticle varies in thickness. On parts exposed to pressure, such as the heel, the ball of the great toe, and the hands of people following heavy manual occupations, the cuticle grows thick and horny; between it and real horn there is very little difference in point of fact. That the cuticle is devoid of sensation—that it is not provided with nerves, in other words—is demonstrated by the cutting of a corn. Examined by the microscope it is seen to be made up of flattened cells, varying as to figure. The deepest of these cells are elongated and perpendicularly arranged. They change their form according to the pressure to which they are subjected, and some other circumstances. These cells are not empty, but filled with a material—sometimes fluid, sometimes solid, and either white or dark-coloured. When the latter, it constitutes the visible peculiarity of the negro and other dark races of men. The dark colour of the negro has its seat in the rete mucosum, which some anatomists reckon as being only the deeper and softer part of the cuticle. This

dark-skin pigment very much resembles in nature, if it be not identical with, the dark-eye pigment. When the cuticle or scarf-skin of a negro is raised by a blister, the surface heals of the original dark colour; but if a negro's skin be destroyed to some depth, as by a burn or an excision, then the restored substance is no longer dark. This dark substance may be bleached by chlorine. I have myself bleached a negro hand to the tint almost of a lily. The hand was dead, however. I imagine the sensation of a chlorine bath would be almost too lively for any living negro: if he could stand it, and would stand it, however, the black pigment would turn white. Returning to the skin, we arrive next at the true skin, *cutis vera*. It has been already explained how this is covered and defended externally. Internally it is attached to the parts beneath by what anatomists call subcutaneous tissue. In some places it is loosely attached, so that the skin may be pinched up; in other places more tightly. The *corium*, or true skin, as the latter designation indicates, is the most important; wherefore to it we are to look for the exemplification of skin-functions. Here in this do we find the sense of touch developed; the cuticle, or external covering, as already stated, being wholly devoid of sensation. Mostly the nerves of touch end in little hillocks, or *papillæ*; the latter, as is supposed, being designed to increase the available feeling-surface. The true skin is thickly ramified with blood-vessels, and other little vessels called lymphatics. Through it, extending outwards, are thousands upon thousands of little openings, each the extremity of a tube—some to emit moisture, some to emit gas and take in air—to breathe, in fact—whilst others are the tubular opening of glands.

Such being the skin—so highly organised, so delicate, so multifarious an organism, so wonderfully made, one having so many things to do—is it reasonable to think we can abuse the skin by laying on pigments at random with impunity? Believe me, not. If I touch a wasp with a drop of oil, the wasp soon dies suffocated. Breathing wholly by apertures through its skin, the oil fills up those apertures, and the insect dies in consequence. We human beings are not so badly off as that. We have lungs to breathe with, though wasps have not; hence nothing laid upon the skin to occlude our skin-pores would have the effect of suffocating us suddenly. The use of such is very prejudicial nevertheless, and should ever be borne in mind when the use of skin-cosmetics is contemplated. This is not the worst that may happen. The human organism may not only be injured through painting or varnishing large portions of the skin, so that it can no longer breathe or transpire; another injury may come through the further evil of injurious things absorbed and taken into the system. Thus, to take an imaginary case, if perchance the fashion should ever dawn and come into vogue of rubbing blue mercurial ointment upon the skin, in the interests of promoting some imaginary beauty, the effect would soon be *death through salivation*. Such a case is impossible: since the time

of the ancient Britons nobody in this country has been thought the more handsome for being painted blue. Still, the assumption is not valueless. Though mercurial preparations be not used as skin-pigments, they are frequently used—and worse, *arsenic*—as depilatories applied to the skin to accomplish the removal of superfluous hair. In this way the result has frequently been injurious; in some cases fatal. Lead preparations, again, are to be guarded against solicitously. Painters who get smeared with white-lead, printers who handle printing-types (the metal of which is partly lead), plumbers and smelters and others much concerned in handling the metal-lead or its compounds, are ever subject to incur that frightful disease lead-colic and palsy. I myself knew a printer who died from this cause. These facts may serve to fix on the mind the care with which lead applications should be regarded. Occasionally flake-white, which is none other than white-lead, has been used to impart whiteness to the skin. The practice is dangerous beyond my power to reprobate. Suffering, up to torture the most awful, ending in death, is always imminent. Another reprehensible custom, involving the cosmetic use of a lead compound, is the following. Upon the face or other visible skin a pimple is seen, or other eruption; whereupon, at the instigation of some old woman who cures with simples—using nothing strong—a wash of Goulard-water is applied again and again. Now Goulard-water is none else than a soluble preparation of lead, adapted in the highest degree to the absorbent capacity of the skin. It is absorbed into the system, and evil effects arise, few knowing whence they come. Goulard-water is no simple, believe me. It may be used in certain cases with advantage once in a way; but no doctor would dare to use it over long periods, as certain old women do who cure (and kill) by simples.

J. SCOFFERN, M.B.

STUDIES IN TENNYSON

SOCIETY exacts a familiarity with certain books. With the last new novel, of course; but beyond this, with works of greater pretensions. There are histories (Macaulay's, for instance) which one must have read; it is necessary to have dipped into Carlyle; and some knowledge of one or two poets is indispensable. But while one must go into the standard authors, it is not necessary to go very far. The number of what may be termed "classics of society" is restricted, and it is in bad taste to affect a familiarity with those that have not the *entrée* of the drawing-room. Amongst the poets there is only one with whom a close familiarity is insisted on. A vague, general knowledge of the others will suffice; but one must have read—must be able to quote, or recognise when quoted—the verses of Alfred Tennyson. The fact of his being the Court poet, and that in a much closer sense than any of the Laureates have been for years, will account for this to some extent; but these further and more sufficing reasons may also be advanced—Tennyson's is the poetry of the age; it reflects its views, its aims, its aspirations; it expresses what we all think and feel, and in the happiest manner—tersely, elegantly, with exquisite simplicity, and wholly *sans aller terre à terre*. For this reason Tennyson has become an accessory to life. We could hardly get on without him. It is difficult to imagine how people in past times ever became "engaged" without the aid of *Locksley Hall*, or gave expression to their *tristesse* when there was no Marianna in her Moated Grange to declare that her heart was weary and express a wish for her speedy demise.

Yes, to know Tennyson is as necessary as to be familiar with Gounod or Meyerbeer. Not to recognise a line from *In Memoriam* is as unpardonable as to have no appreciation of the *morceau à l'unison* from *L'Africaine*. And the matter does not end here. We are entering on a new phase of Tennyson worship. Hitherto it has been enough to read him, and to commit a verse or two here or there to memory. Now we have passed beyond that stage. To have read the poems does not suffice. It is not only necessary to know what they are about, but to know *all about them*. Bibliography in connection with the Laureate's works is the newest rage; and just as everyone is supposed to know something about the Shakespeare folios—to distinguish between that of 1623 and that of 1632, for instance—so you are now expected to be "posted up" in the Tennysonian editions. Of course, with many the *mania goes further than this*. People who recently would give a

guinea for a penny postage-stamp, when it was the right thing to "collect," now buy up at fabulous prices Tennyson's early books. That scrubby little volume, *Poems by two Brothers*, published at Louth in 1827, is worth its weight in gold; and I am thinking of having my first edition of the *Poems* (1830) chained up, as books were chained to the desks in old libraries, as the only chance of keeping it in my possession. Enthusiasm goes even beyond the desire to possess at any price these early editions. There were certain magazines, some long since defunct, in which the young poet was reviewed, with more or less acerbity; and these now become prizes about which collectors squabble as old ladies of a past time did over china monsters and egg-shell cups and saucers. Already a book on Tennyson bibliography has appeared, a kind of guide to the uninitiated, and this is doubtless but a first step in the new direction. We may look for a Variorum Tennyson at the very least before many years have passed.

Naturally this new form of Tennyson admiration is founded on something like reason. There is a cause for it. Early editions are not bought up simply because they are old, and the reviews eagerly sought after have special points rendering them valuable. The early editions, I may say in a word, are prized because the poet is infinitely fastidious in taste, and is always altering, adding, and omitting. Thus, a given poem may be extant in half-a-dozen forms, and one edition of a volume may differ in essential particulars from the very next issuing from the press. Hence it is very interesting to collate; and if we cannot by this means study the growth of the poet's mind, we get fully at his meaning, and trace the steps by which he has attained to perfection. So in regard to the reviews mentioned; they are such as are known to have had an effect on the poet, either in the way of provoking retort or causing omissions from subsequent editions of his volumes. The bibliography of Tennyson is thus not without value, and the results attained by those who have made it a study are full of interest even for the general reader.

The Poet Laureate was born at the little village of Somersby in Lincolnshire, in 1809. His father, Dr. George Clayton Tennyson, was rector of that and adjoining parishes. The rector had several sons besides Alfred—two of them poets, who in early life gave greater promise than he who has rendered the family name immortal. It was in connection with his brother Charles that he first ventured into print. The *Poems by two Brothers*, published by J. Jackson, Market-place, Louth, were their joint production. This early volume is very curious. It bears the motto *Hæc nos novimus esse nihil* (We know this to be nothing). The poems fill two hundred pages, and are upon a variety of subjects—from "The Fall of Jerusalem," to "The Death of my Grandmother;" from "The Expedition of Nadir Shah into Hindostan," to "Sunday Mobs." One curious point in this volume is the difficulty of assigning to the brothers their respective shares in it; but

here and there are lines unmistakably from Alfred's pen — the first stirrings of the great heart in song. For instance :

"At times her partial splendour shines
Upon the grove of deep black pines."

Another point to note is the obvious influence of Byron, stronger then than that of Shakespeare, so apparent in the poet's later works.

Cambridge is Tennyson's Alma Mater (though I saw him receive his D.C.L. degree at Oxford—a memorable occasion). He entered at Trinity College in 1829. The same year he contended with his friend Arthur Henry Hallam, whom he afterwards sang in undying verse, for the Chancellor's gold medal—the subject of his prize poem that year being "Timbuctoo." With a poem in blank verse on this absurd topic he won the medal, and further produced a work that attracted the attention of the critics outside the University. It was declared that "it would have done honour to any man who ever wrote." Wisely, however, the Laureate has only preserved three lines of it.

The first volume of verse that Alfred Tennyson avowed as his own was published in 1830. He called it *Poems chiefly Lyrical*. The publisher was Effingham Wilson. The copy before me—a thin unpretending volume of 154 pages—has the price printed on it—five shillings: it would now be very cheap at a guinea. In looking over it one cannot fail to be struck with a singular fact. There are here some of the gems with which the poet's name is associated; they gleam and sparkle in all their perfection just as they have been printed again and again, without a word of alteration. Take, for example, "The Poet" and "Oriana." Yet side by side with these are verses of marked inferiority, which the maturer taste of the writer has induced him to abandon as worthless. It is very singular to reflect that the mind capable of producing the better poems, the taste that could give them their exquisite form, should have been incapable then of rejecting the alloy that so detracts from the charm of the volume. Little worth preserving has been lost to us from the revision of these poems; but of that little take this specimen of elegiacs, surely very beautiful :

"Low-flowing breezes are roaming the broad valley, dimmed in the gloaming;
Through the black-stemmed pines only the far river shines,
Creeping through blossomy rushes and bowers of rose-blowing bushes;
Down by the poplar tall rivulets babble and fall."

This, again, is well put :

"The wise, could he behold
Cathedral'd caverns of thick-ribbed gold,
And branching silvers of the central globe,
Would marvel from so beautiful a sight
How scorn and ruin, pain and hate, could flow."

One marked peculiarity in Tennyson in this early time was the use of *strange compound words*, very startling to the ordinary reader.

Thus we get "globefilled," "cavernthroats," "thickstemmed," and "daisyblossomed," printed thus, without any connecting hyphen. Singular to the eye is this apostrophe to the grasshopper, as

"Voice of the summerwind
Joy of the summerplain
Life of the summerhours."

A tendency to forced accentuation is still further bewildering.

The gem of this volume, apart from matter afterwards reprinted, is a description of the death of an animal, occurring in the course of a long poem, which I think has seldom been surpassed:

"The lamb rejoiceth in the year,
And raceth freely with his fere,
And answers to his mother's calls
From the flowered furrow. In a time
Of which he wots not, run short pains
Through his warm heart; and then, from whence
He knows not, on his light there falls
A shadow; and his native slope,
Where he was wont to leap and climb,
Floats from his sick and filmed eyes,
And something in the darkness draws
His forehead earthward, and he dies."

Only a great poet could have written that. The volume, indeed, though crude and unsatisfactory in many respects, is far above the average. The *Westminster Review* predicted from it something of the glory which now overshadows the poet's brow. And Arthur Hallam wrote of his friend: "He has yet written little, and published less; but in these 'preludes of a loftier strain' we recognise the inspiring God. . . . There is a strange earnestness in his worship of beauty, which throws a charm over his impassioned song more easily felt than described, and not to be escaped by those who have once felt it. . . . The features of original genius are clearly and strongly marked."

There was, however, quite enough in the volume to excite the laughter of the unsympathetic; and a review in *Blackwood* (vol. xxxi. p. 721), by Professor Wilson, was so savage in its tone, and so unfair, that it provoked a retort. In those days, and in later years, Tennyson was not disposed to let his critics get off scot-free; and in this instance he wrote some lines in allusion to "Crusty Christopher," which he has since had the good sense to suppress. They were feeble, and unworthy of his pen. They appeared in his next volume, *Poems*, in 1833, published by Messrs. Moxon, who have brought out all his subsequent works.* This volume is rare and choice, because it contains much since

* A valuable relic has just come to light. It is a sonnet which appeared in *The Yorkshire Literary Annual* for 1832:

"There are three things that fill my heart with sighs
And steep my soul in laughter (when I view
Fair maiden forms moving like melodies)—
Dimples, rose-lips, and eyes of any hue."

abandoned, and many first readings of famous passages. It comprises the "Miller's Daughter," which has been greatly altered; and if I wished to show a young poet an example of what care and polish may effect, I would point to the song, "It is the Miller's Daughter," as it was first printed, in comparison with the gem it now is. The lines have all been shortened; and the effect thus obtained is magical. The "Palace of Art" appears in this volume in a form very different from that in which we now have it.

When you order Tennyson's *Poems* of your bookseller, you get a book which is now in its sixteenth edition, but is substantially the same as it was issued in 1842. It comprises selections from the volumes of 1830 and 1833 (carefully revised), and a mass of original matter, including the famous *Locksley Hall*. The effect of this book was to give the poet a place in the forefront of the men of his day. Yet it is singular that some of our greatest men failed at first to recognise his surpassing genius. Lord Lytton was of the number. The volume of 1833 had contained a poem, "O darling Room," not very brilliant; yet it was reprinted. Over this his lordship made merry; and in the *New Timon* (1846) went out of his way to hold Tennyson (who had just received a grant from the privy-purse) up to ridicule. He spoke of

"The jingling medley of purloin'd conceits,
Outbabying Wordsworth and outglittering Keates (*sic*),
Where all the airs of patchwork pastoral chime
To drowsy ears in Tennysonian rhyme."

And further:

"Let school-miss Alfred vent her chaste delight
On 'darling little rooms so warm and bright';
Chant 'I'm a-weary' in infectious strain,
And catch her 'blue fly singing i' the pane.'"

The incensed bard was not long in retorting; and he has been thought to have had the best of it in certain verses in *Punch* of that year, unmistakably from his pen. It is curious to turn to them. There are eleven stanzas, but some amongst them are indifferent. The composition only amuses as a curiosity of literature. In two ways Lord Lytton has made the *amende*. The offensive passage was omitted from the new editions of his work—in the fourth, now before me, it is wanting; and subsequently, in a speech at Hertford, he spoke of the

There are three things beneath the blessed skies
For which I live—black eyes and brown and blue:
I hold them all most dear; but O, black eyes,
I live and die and only die for you!
Of late such eyes looked at me—while I mused
At sunset underneath a shadowy plane
In old Bayona, nigh the southern sea—
From a half-open lattice looked at me.
I saw no more, only those eyes, confused
And dazzled to the heart with glorious pain."

It is singular that this charming sonnet should not have appeared in the volume of 1833, then preparing for the press.

Laureate's genius in becoming terms. Tennyson, on his part, abandoned the "little room," together with the "Skipping-ropes" and other puerilities.

In 1847 appeared the *Princess*; and an edition of that date is interesting, because lines have been since added, and some little changes have been made in the conduct of the poem. The lyrics dividing the poem so charmingly were an after-thought also. It is worthy of no one of these lyrics—"As through the land at eve we went"—and some additions when reprinted in Moxon's selections, 1865. Even the two verses we there get,

"And blessings on the falling out
That all the more endears,
When we fall out with those we love,
And kiss again with tears."

There also we have another version of "Home they brought him dead," beginning, "Home they brought him, slain with sword." The great poem *In Memoriam* appeared in 1850. The seventh edition contains revisions, and is therefore valuable for collation. In 1850 Tennyson was made Laureate; and to an edition of his *Poems* (volume of 1842) published in that year, he prefixed a dedication to the Queen—not a very brilliant performance, still a superior laureate-work. Curious to note that in subsequent reprints the allusion to the Crystal Palace are omitted:

"She brought a vast design to pass,
When Europe and the scatter'd ends
Of our fierce world did meet as friends
And brethren in her halls of glass."

In 1855 came *Maud*, to a considerable extent a mosaic of poems written years before; much of it very beautiful. The new edition of 1859 should be examined: there is much new matter in it. *Idylls of the King* (1859),* by many regarded as the poet's finest work, has gone through several editions. None of these are specially interesting in a bibliographical point of view; but the dedication to Albert was not added until after the prince's death. *Enoch* (1864) completes the series, if we except "a selection" already issued in 1865, interesting and valuable in many respects, as it contains new poems and new readings. The latter constitute the great charm of Tennysonian study.

There is, indeed, nothing more remarkable than the exquisite taste the poet has displayed in fitting his works for the immortality to which they are destined. It is more than good taste; it is instinct. In almost all his alterations and omissions it is the dross only that is removed; the gold remains. Sometimes a happy line is saved

* First part, called *Ened and Nimue, or the True and the False*, was printed in 1857. This edition is very scarce.

but as we examine it microscopically we find that there was some flaw in it. For instance, in *Amphion* one is amused with

"The gin within the juniper
Began to make him merry."

But the point is gained at the expense of truth, in a strictly scientific point of view; and so the lines have been sacrificed in late editions. The one instance that occurs to me of a refinement resulting in weakness is in the *In Memoriam*, where the familiar lines,

"And dear as sacramental wine
To dying lips is all he said,"

have been changed into

"And dear to me as sacred wine
To dying lips is all he said."

This alteration has been made at the expense of all force and beauty. "Sacred wine" is feeble, and almost, if not utterly, meaningless; and in spite of the seventh edition the earlier form will always be the popular one.

W. S.



LYRICS OF THE MONTHS

DECEMBER

The Cotillon

AH, would one face but pass
Across this fragile glass,
As now I hold it ;
How should I turn aside,
My too deep love to hide,
And blush that told it !

One face that comes in sleep,
One face that still can keep
My heart from breaking.
I am too proud, they say ;
I brush the rest away,
No new love taking.

Sages in days of old
Had power, so legends told,
In secret places,
Upon a glass to raise
Shadows of olden days
And far-off faces.

Had I that power to-night,
This mirror should be bright
With my Love's glances ;
My spell should bring him near.
A face!—ah, he is here!—
So end my fancies.



apson, del.

THE COTILLON.

W. L. Thomas, sc.



THE BLAMELESS ÆTHIOPIANS

If travellers' tales are to be credited, the culinary art must surely have degenerated in Habesh since those days of yore, when the dwellers on the cloud-capt Olympus delighted in the banquets of "the blameless Æthiopians." Hospitality, indeed, may be as largely practised as ever, but in a manner that, according to our narrow insular notions, would be more honoured in the breach than in the observance. The standing dish in every well-appointed household is a square junk of raw beef cut from the still-quivering animal. The reeking mass is served up on a thick broad cake of unleavened dough, made from a species of grain called *teff*. Smaller cakes, somewhat resembling the *chupatties* of Upper India, are placed before each person, and by his side similar cakes of a coarser kind to wipe his fingers upon, which are afterwards eaten by the servants. The meat, if not tender, is at least juicy, for the cow is usually slaughtered at the very door of the banqueting-hall; the piteous groans of the poor beast supplying the place of that "tocsin of the soul, the dinner-bell." Thrown violently to the ground, the animal's throat is severed almost through, in the name of the Holy Trinity, and before life is extinct the meat is cut off from the bones and, without further preparation, set before the impatient and voracious guests. Each then helps himself with the aid of the long crooked knife which every Abyssinian wears at his girdle—a carving-knife at the banquet, but a sword on the field of battle. In genteel society the gentlemen are assisted by the ladies, who divide the slices into long thin strips about the size of the little finger, cutting these again into square dice-like pieces, which they roll up in a shred of *teff*-cake, after first pouring over them a fiery sauce called *dillak*, composed of red pepper, onions, salt, and butter. The tempting morsel is crammed into the gaping mouth of the beau by the fair one's side, and speedily disposed of with much smacking of lips. "The greater the man would seem to be," says Bruce, "the larger piece he takes in his mouth; and the more noise he makes in chewing it, the more polite he is thought to be." A loud and hog-like mastication is such an indispensable element of good breeding, that it has passed into a proverb that only thieves and beggars take small mouthfuls and eat in silence. When sufficiently gorged, the gentleman requites the delicate attentions of his self-denying neighbour by preparing and popping into her mouth a goodly cartridge of *brind* or *broundo*, as the raw collops are termed, and then applies himself to assuaging his thirst by quaffing from a horn large draughts of mead or beer. The latter beverage is a fermented liquor

made from sprouted barley, and, though a potent instigator of brawls, entails no headache on the morrow.

The priests have, fortunately, devised a check to the insatiable voracity of the Abyssinians by the institution of numerous fasts. "My people," observed the Primate, Aboona Salama, to the Rev. Mr. Stern, "are a gluttonous set, and if they were permitted to indulge in animal food every day, the race of domestic cattle would soon be extinct." No matter at what hour a traveller may arrive, food and shelter are never refused. He is expected to eat, and by way of encouragement the host will sit down by his side and fall-to with apparently as keen an appetite as if he too had come off a long journey, fasting. Not unfrequently a man of distinction will call for meat and drink in the middle of the night, when they are instantly set before him by an attendant in a state of complete nudity; for the domestics lie down together in their master's anteroom after divesting themselves of every article of raiment. In a general way, however, the Abyssinians confine themselves to two meals a day; the first about noon, and the second after sunset. To guard against the evil eye, the doors are closed before each meal; and it is with the utmost difficulty an Abyssinian can be induced to eat in the open air, subject to the malefic influence of passing spirits. There are also several kinds of meat which are held to be unclean—as veal, wild-fowl, water-fowl, the hare, and in some districts the wild-boar. To a certain extent the Mosaic law constitutes the rule of life in this important matter.

In form and feature the Abyssinians are superior to the most advanced tribes of Central Africa. Of the middle stature, but somewhat slender, they carry themselves very erect; nor are their rounded limbs deficient in muscular power. In complexion, indeed, they vary from light olive brown to jet black; and in the low country the admixture of negro blood is easily discernible. The Amhara women are described by Mr. Stern as plump and well-proportioned, "with high and broad foreheads, aquiline noses, and eyes which, notwithstanding their unpleasing large size and dark brilliancy, are so tempered by a soft dreamy expression, that they rather enhance, than detract from, what Orientals consider the perfection of beauty." Unfortunately they cannot let well alone, but are often tempted to supplement nature by art. It is thus they eradicate their eyebrows, and paint in their place a narrow curved line of bluish tint, at the same time daubing their cheeks with a pigment composed of red ochre and fat. But what an Abyssinian lady most prides herself upon is the luxuriance of her raven hair, though she does her utmost to counteract this natural beauty by dressing it after a hideous and execrable fashion. Sometimes a portion of the head is close shaven and encircled with a narrow greasy fillet, but more frequently the hair is twisted into a multitude of plaits *diverging* from a common centre, and reminding a European of the *statues and monuments* of ancient Egypt. Occasionally, in the highest

circles, the hair is allowed to fall in natural curls over the neck and shoulders; while countrywomen and domestic servants simply touzle their superabundant locks into a tangled mass; but all classes alike besmear their heads with rancid butter, disgusting both to sight and smell. To prevent the elaborate plaits from becoming dishevelled by restless movements during sleep, ladies of rank rest their heads at night in a sort of bowl-shaped stool, which they carry with them when leaving home.

However particular they may be in the adjustment of their luxuriant hair, the women of Abyssinia are comparatively negligent in the matter of dress. The higher classes attire themselves in a chemise, or under-garment, over which they wear "a loose shirt reaching below the knees, and neatly embroidered in front and on the cuffs." In addition to this simple costume, a *shama*, or toga, with a smart silk border, is, on certain occasions, wrapped round the form in graceful folds, or a gaudy cloak of European manufacture is thrown over the shoulders. In the humbler grades of society, however, women content themselves with a wide sack of strong coarse calico, with baggy sleeves, girded round the waist with a narrow belt. When going abroad they also wrap themselves in a sort of toga, or winding-sheet, not unlike the Bengali dress, the folds of which envelope their persons from head to foot. The peasant women are satisfied with still less clothing, merely covering their loins with a short petticoat made of coarse cotton or dressed skin. On one point rich and poor are quite in accord. Nothing can exceed their passion for ornaments. Those who can afford it, festoon themselves with chains of silver bells, scent-boxes, rosaries, bangles, and charms against the evil eye; while the less fortunate deck themselves out with strings of amulets sewn in square leather cases, and of beads, the fashion of which varies—as Bruce discovered, to his momentary discomfiture. He had purchased, we are told, "a quantity, beautifully flowered with red and green, of the size of a large pea; also some large oval green and yellow ones; whereas the *ton* among the beauties of Tigré required small sky-blue beads, about the size of small lead shot, blue and white bugles, and large yellow glass beads flat on the sides." Tastes, however, seem to have changed since then; for Mr. Stern speaks of large black and yellow beads as being most in vogue five or six years ago. Neither men nor women wear shoes, with the exception of "a few stylish ladies and conceited priests;" but the former sometimes dye both their feet and their hands of a reddish hue. A blue silken cord, called *matteb*, is worn round the neck by every Abyssinian professing Christianity, whether male or female.

The costume of the men is not more ornate than that of the women. All classes alike attire themselves in a loose white cotton *shama*, worn precisely as the ancient Romans did the toga, or as the Bengalees do their flowing robes at the present day. The softness of texture and the *depth of the red border round the bottom alone mark the difference*

of social position. Beneath the *shama*, a few officers and dignitaries of state display a *kamees*, or shirt, of silk, damask, or velvet, bestowed by the sovereign as a mark of especial favour. All ranks, however, are clad in short cotton drawers, and wind round the waist a cotton cloth of inordinate length, after the manner of the Indian *kummerbund*. In a campaign the *shama* is laid aside in favour of the *dino*, or sheepskin—sometimes a lion's or leopard's skin—fastened round the neck by a strip of leather. Not unfrequently these skins are lined with red cotton stuff or gay-patterned chintz; while in battle the chiefs don scarlet cloaks by way of distinction.

According to Consul Plowden, an Abyssinian is incapable of feeling shame, unless it be for “a solecism in what he considers good manners, or the neglect of some superstitious form of social observance.” The women, we learn on the same authority, are “rarely gross or immodest outwardly, seeing that they need in no way be ashamed of the freest intercourse with the other sex.” Theoretically monogamists, the Abyssinians indulge in a plurality of concubines. King Sahela Selassie, the potentate to whose court a British mission was sent in 1841, had no fewer than 500 concubines of various degrees of intimacy. In the eye of the law no difference is made between legitimate and illegitimate children. All share alike the paternal property, and are treated by the father with equal kindness and affection. Matrimony is rather a civil than a religious institution. In most cases the parents arrange with the head man of the village as to the number of cows and *shamas* the bride and bridegroom are respectively to contribute to the common store, and in the event of a separation each carries off whatever belongs to himself or herself. In Tigré it is the custom for man and woman to be equally dowered, but among the Amharas the latter is usually expected to possess double the amount produced by her temporary lord and master. The religious ceremony is indissoluble, and therefore rarely performed until late in life. In this case, both parties, if Christians, receive the sacrament; if Mohammedans, they announce, in presence of the kadi, their intention to live together as man and wife. Women attain maturity much earlier here than in Europe, and consequently are old in appearance while yet young in years. Ladies of high rank are kept as carefully secluded as in Moslem countries, and when they ride abroad are not only closely muffled up, but are attended by jealous and watchful guards. All these precautions naturally tend to defeat their own object, and thus it happens that the immorality of Abyssinian women, of all classes, surpasses that of every other professedly Christian people. Like the Japanese, too, those who lay claim to any sort of respectability are ignorant and uneducated; while the Azmari monopolise the attractive accomplishments, especially music, dancing, and the drama. The music may be monotonous to European ears, but it is at least suited to the native taste; while the dancing is a sort of spinning round, like a teetotum, to the accompaniment of

a species of clarionet. There is, however, another and very popular dance, which consists in two partners standing back to back, alternately shrugging up their shoulders and bending back their heads, while making a peculiar noise with the hand under the armpit and with the tongue. Musical courtesans accompany military expeditions, and, like the minstrels of mediæval Europe, arouse the courage of the warriors by chanting the exploits of their leaders and the deeds of bygone heroes.

"Friendship," writes Consul Plowden, "is measured by gifts." The phrase is rather epigrammatic than strictly correct. It would have been nearer the truth to have said that the offering of presents is reduced to a system of exchange. As in Asiatic countries, it is the custom on approaching a superior to tender a token of respect, which is usually repaid manifold. In the case of equals, if an adequate return is not made, an action can be brought as for debt, and compensation will be enforced by the court. Presents are always brought into the room, no matter of what kind they may be—meat, vegetables, fish, poultry, asses, or cows. Men of the highest rank do not scruple to ask for anything they may happen to fancy. So far is this shamelessness carried, that M. Lefebvre asserts that, in Shoa, chiefs are sometimes buried with an arm and hand protruding from the ground, lest they should lose the habit of receiving presents through the accident of death. Language, as an Abyssinian wit observed in that traveller's presence, was given for the purpose of begging. If almsgiving be a virtue, it is one for the practice of which a wide field exists in Habesh. While every man is an amateur mendicant, professional beggars swarm in every town and hamlet. "The king himself," writes Mr. Stern, "from motives of mistaken piety, encourages this social bane; hence, wherever he moves, bands of professional *fukirs* on mules and horses dog his steps and din his ear with their perpetual whine." "Close under the crumbling parapet that fenced-in the royal premises, hordes of mendicants, clad and unclad, sound and diseased, some smitten with the curse of leprosy, others with virulent scrofula, in promiscuous confusion lay hideously exposed in their own pest-creating atmosphere."

Mr. Stern, it must be confessed, holds the Abyssinians in no high esteem. They are, he says, "a false, treacherous, and insolent race—absurdly superstitious in their religious belief, and revoltingly obscene in their domestic relations—insolent to an inferior, and cringing and servile to a superior—a nation, in fact, so debased in mind and vitiated in heart, that, notwithstanding their physical and intellectual superiority to every other African tribe, they vie with all in untruthfulness, cunning, and moral depravity." On the other hand, they possess certain showy qualities which render their companionship entertaining, if their friendship be valueless. They are full of vivacity, eloquent of speech, addicted to satire, gifted with a keen sense of humour, kindly disposed towards *their dependents*, affectionate towards their children,

patient of fatigue, calm and dignified in adversity, brave in encountering dangers with which they are familiar, but liable to panics through their childish superstitiousness. They still hold the mediæval belief touching the "loup-garou," or "wehr-wolf," only substituting the hyena for the wolf. Workers in iron are thought to be peculiarly liable to this horrible transformation. They also cling to the ancient Hebrew superstition as to the demoniacal possession of individuals, and seek to cast out the tormenting spirit by old-world exorcisms. On this subject some very curious but disgusting stories are told in Mr. Stern's *Wanderings among the Falashas*, a book full of interesting matter respecting the domestic manners and customs of the people of Abyssinia.

Their whole religious system, in fact, is a gross superstition. Calling themselves Christians, they worship only the Virgin and a multitude of apocryphal saints and angels. "A round of worthless ceremonies," writes the traveller above quoted, "and the daily repetition of the Litany in a language (Geez, compounded of Arabic and Amharic) not understood by the people, and very often a dead letter even to the officiating priest, constitutes the service of the Church." "Fasts and penances, the adoration of the Virgin, and the intercession of saints, together with the practice of circumcision, the observance of the Jewish Sabbath, and of all the Mosaic restrictions as to clean and unclean animals, form the essential teachings of their creed. A beggar in the street would in vain ask charity in the name of the Saviour; but let him pronounce the magical word 'Miriam,' and a humble apology or a small pittance will be the reply. To adore an image is considered a heinous offence; but to fall down before the coarsest daub, or the wooden *tabot* [an effigy of the Ark of the Covenant, occupying the place of the altar or communion-table in Abyssinian churches], is the highest act of Christian devotion. Fasts are observed most rigorously; and the wretch who is rioting in every shameful vice will shrink with horror from the man who touches animal food during the interdicted seasons. Vice and immorality are even regulated by a peculiar ecclesiastical code; and a conscientious sinner will not hesitate to consult his spiritual adviser as to the day and hour when he may with impunity break a divine law."

It is not, however, in Abyssinia alone that the spirit of Christianity has been superseded by a formal observance of ceremonial mummery. In other so-called Christian lands the brigand uncovers his head and reverently kneels in the mire as the sound of the vesper-bell is borne on the evening breeze, and then with peaceful conscience cuts the throat and carries off the spoils of the unarmed and defenceless traveller. A belief in Purgatory is likewise one of the tenets of the Abyssinian creed. The repose of the departed soul is usually purchased by a *tascar*, or banquet, given to the priests and *debertahs*, or scribes, a fortnight or a month after its separation from the body.

The greater the number of cows slaughtered, the larger the supply of beer provided, on such occasions, the speedier will be the escape of the soul from its place of suffering and purification. Pilgrimages to Jerusalem are also not unfrequently attempted, if seldom perfected. Many die on the way, after enduring the most dreadful hardships, and not a few embrace the faith of Islam at Jeddah for the sake of the small sum of money bestowed upon renegades, by the aid of which they struggle on to the Holy City : of these, the few that survive to return to their native land lose no time in abjuring the religion enforced on them by adverse circumstances, and are restored, after due penance, to all the privileges they had temporarily forfeited. The dissolute habits of the priests are so scandalous that, if any peculiarly aggravated case of profligacy comes to light, it is sarcastically observed of the delinquent, "O, he lives at Gondar," the head-quarters of the priesthood. The *debterahs*, or scribes, are not less immoral than their religious brethren. One of these being gravely rebuked for the flagitious conduct of his fraternity, instead of either denying the charge or expressing any regret or wish for reformation, coolly replied : "Our hearts are good, and we don't want to spoil them by vows, which we may regret, or perhaps never keep." In default of morality, disputations concerning scholastic and theological trifles are more common than profitable. In Bruce's *Travels* it is related how a fierce dispute raged for a while at Gondar, the origin of which was a question regarding the fate of Nebuchadnezzar,—“Whether he was now a saint in heaven, or burning in hell-fire with Dathan and Abiram ?” The rioting was finally suppressed by proclamation, expelling “the monks and other disorderly persons,” and “announcing that 400 Galla were to patrol and scour the streets at night, and that others were to watch and clear the roads.” This vigorous measure “put a speedy end to the concern for Nebuchadnezzar, and the impertinences of the monks.”

The Primate of the Abyssinian Church, called the “Aboona,” is consecrated by the Patriarch of Alexandria, as the successor of St. Mark, and must necessarily be a foreigner. The reverence shown to this exalted personage borders on adoration, though he is usually chosen from a low order of Coptic priests. His official duties are sufficiently onerous. He ordains all priests and deacons, consecrates all churches, absolves gift-presenting penitents from deadly sin, excommunicates the contumacious, and touching political and military affairs exercises an influence second only to that of the emperor. There is also a native head of the Church, called the Tchegee or Etchegué, who represents the national interests, and is the mouthpiece of the priests when points of difference arise between them and the metropolitan. Neither of these two high dignitaries is permitted to marry, though one wife is allowed to priests and deacons.

The Christian population of Abyssinia is, for the most part, confined to the *highlands* comprised between Sennaar and the Blue Nile,

extending some 400 miles in length from north to south, and nearly 300 miles in extreme breadth from north-north-west to south-south-east. This mountainous country nowhere approaches the sea nearer than from 70 to 100 miles, the intervening lowlands being occupied by the Galla and other fierce tribes, professing a bastard Mohammedanism, occasionally intermingled with a hybrid Christianity. There is reason to believe that the primitive religion of Abyssinia was Sabæanism, which was superseded in after times by a modification of the Hebrew system of theology. According to tradition the Abyssinians became converted to Judaism on the arrival of Menilek, the offspring of Solomon and the Queen of Sheba, accompanied by Azariah, son of Zadok the high-priest. Less imaginative chroniclers, however, are content to date the Jewish immigration from the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, and consequent dispersion of that people throughout all lands. Christianity appears to have been introduced in the first half of the fourth century, the first bishop, Frumentius, having received letters of consecration from St. Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria, A.D. 333. This Frumentius, it is said, was the son of Meropius, a Tyrian merchant, whose ship was wrecked on the Abyssinian coast, when all hands were put to death with the exception of the future bishop and his brother Edesius, who, being comely youths, were reserved from the slaughter to be presented as slaves to the emperor. The two young men conducted themselves in such a manner that, little by little, they obtained a remarkable degree of influence at court, and finally persuaded the monarch, his courtiers, and the entire nation to accept the Christian faith as understood in the Coptic Church. On this the Jews gathered together and withdrew to the mountainous districts of Semien and Bellesa, where they enjoyed a certain degree of independence under princes of their own blood, who took the surname of Gideon or Judith, as the case required. About the middle of the tenth century the chief authority among these Jews, or Falashas as they are now designated, was exercised by a princess not more distinguished for her beauty than for her masculine talents and resolution. This intrepid Lioness of Judah suddenly invaded the Christian lands, overthrew and deposed the emperor, and put to death 500 scions of the royal house who were confined in the rock fortress of Damo. This was the custom of the Abyssinian monarchs at a yet later period. On the accession of a new sovereign his royal kinsmen were placed in confinement, though otherwise well treated, where they endeavoured to relieve the monotony of their lives by carving on harps and making ivory ornaments—a somewhat different employment of their time from that practised by Ras-selas in his Happy Valley. The Jewish usurpation lasted for nearly three hundred years, when the old dynasty was restored and Christianity again became the national religion. But a worse danger threatened the kingdom of Habesh in the early part of the sixteenth century. *Hordes of Saracens* under the redoubtable Mohammed Graan estab-

lished themselves in the fertile plains and on the wooded acclivities of the littoral region, and at one time appeared to be on the point of subduing the whole country. By the aid of the Portuguese, however, they were finally driven out of the highlands, though no force availed to wrest from them the fair province of Shoa, where their descendants the Gallas and other cognate tribes still preserve much of their ancient faith and character. Rescued from the domination of Islam, the Abyssinian Church well-nigh succumbed to the wiles and intrigues of the Jesuit missionaries who, in the year 1530, boasted of having made 260,000 converts to the Roman Catholic religion; but three days after their expulsion not a single professing Romanist was to be met with. About one hundred years afterwards the Falashas were completely overcome, their power utterly broken, and themselves driven into the Amhara country, where they reside in small villages distinguished by the red earthen pot on the pinnacle of their *mesquid*, or synagogue. The Gallas are a pastoral and industrious race, full of energy, and accomplished horsemen. Dr. Beke, indeed, has discovered among some of their tribes traces of a debased Christianity that appears in no way superior to their ancestral creed. They believe that the world was created and is preserved by Maremma, or the Virgin Mary, who, at the creation, bestowed upon man the spear and the shield, and upon woman the awl used in basket-making. To her interposition is due the duration of the terrestrial system, which her son Balawald is desirous to terminate, and who will one day sever the chain that binds it to heaven. Maremma has likewise a daughter named Gorobbé, who, when properly invoked, is benignant enough to release her devotees from sickness by removing their disease to one of their enemies. Now, Balawald in the Amharic dialect, which is very slightly understood by the Gallas, signifies the "Festival of the Son," and being frequently used as an imprecation has been misinterpreted by the latter as the very name of the Son, whom they naturally conclude to be malefic. They have other malignant deities manufactured after the same fashion, as "Selassie," literally the Trinity; "Maddior," the Saviour of the world; "Sanbata," the Sabbath; "Kedami," the preceding day, or Saturday; "Gergis," St. George; "Dabilos," the Devil; "Sietan," Satan; &c. There are no priests, no churches, no set form of prayers. It is simply a gross, childish superstition, having nothing in common with Christianity, and scarcely even rising to Mariolatry.

Diplomatic relations between Great Britain and Abyssinia date from 1841, in which year Captain Harris, of the Bombay Engineers, concluded a commercial treaty with Sahela Selassie, Dejaz of Shoa rather than King of Abyssinia. This treaty, however, produced no fruits, and can hardly be said to have had more than a negative existence. But as the natural capabilities of the country were known to be very considerable, Lord Palmerston resolved in 1848 to establish a consular station at Massowah, for the protection of British trade with the peo-

ples on the western shores of the Red Sea. The first consul was Mr. Plowden, who in the following year concluded a Treaty of Friendship and Commerce with Ras Ali, then at the zenith of his power. The futility of attempting to hold civilised intercourse with an uncivilised people was soon apparent; and in the autumn of 1853 we find Lord Clarendon insinuating that the Government had been misled by the consul's representations of the advantages likely to result to British interests from the conclusion of a treaty with the rulers of Abyssinia. But instead of frankly admitting their error and cancelling the useless appointment, the Government persisted in maintaining consular relations with a people that acknowledged no supreme authority. The present emperor manifested from the first a marked repugnance to the establishment of a foreign consulate in his dominions. He was at length, indeed, prevailed upon to recognise Mr. Plowden, and subsequently Captain Cameron, as the official representatives of Great Britain. But no arguments availed to induce the wayward tyrant to ratify the treaty concluded with Ras Ali. He cared little for mere commercial relations. His ambition led him to seek an offensive and defensive alliance, on equal terms, with any European power that would assist him in making war upon the Turks. The prospect of a friendly and familiar intercourse, that would benefit his people rather than promote his own views of personal aggrandisement, made little or no impression upon his untutored mind. Mr. Plowden and Captain Cameron seem alike to have misconceived the nature of the duties that devolved upon them. Instead of remaining at Massowah and devoting themselves to the development of the nascent trade that was springing up at that port, they took upon themselves to interfere in the internal disputes of the feudal chiefs, and even affected to place under British protection certain small tribes occupying the marches of Egypt and Abyssinia. Consul Plowden paid the penalty of his indiscretion by the loss of his life—avenged by the murder in cold blood, at the command of the royal savage, of 1500 prisoners taken in battle. Nor has Captain Cameron been more fortunate, his imprisonment and cruel sufferings being directly traceable to his officious intermeddling with the affairs of the Bogos country, which in no way belonged to his province. Nothing, of course, can justify the treatment to which not only the British consul but so many other Europeans have been subjected, the latter, indeed, having afforded not the slightest provocation. At the same time the greatest blame must rest with those who insisted upon holding diplomatic relations with an irresponsible and half-mad barbarian, who understood nothing of diplomacy, and more than once testified his aversion to the establishment of a foreign consulate within his territories. The sword of the soldier has now to cut the knot entangled by the diplomatist; and the task is by no means an easy one. Should King Theodore decline to *give battle*, the utmost that could be effected by regular troops would

be the temporary occupation of Gondar, and the destruction of the thatched huts that constitute his royal residence at Debra Tabor. By skirting the spurs of the principal range of mountains, and taking the eastern route by Antalo, no natural obstacles will be encountered that cannot easily be surmounted by Anglo-Indian troops. The climate at this season of the year is temperate and even delightful, with the exception of heavy thunderstorms which occasionally break forth with tropical fury. But the chief difficulty to be overcome concerns the carriage of supplies of ammunition and food, as in the absence of roads fit for wheeled conveyances everything must be transported on the backs of mules. Water, too, is neither abundant nor wholesome. It can always be obtained, indeed, by digging a few feet beneath the surface; but this stagnant water is supposed to produce the *kenia* or tape-worm, an infallible remedy for which, however, according to Bishop Gobat, is found in a small grain called "inquoquo." In the field it is unlikely that the Abyssinians will make any strenuous resistance, though it may be expected that the Galla horsemen, allured by the prospect of plunder, will hover like Cossacks on the flanks and rear of the invading host, cutting off stragglers and harassing convoys. No amount of personal valour will nowadays countervail inferiority in arms and discipline. The sword, the spear, and the shield, the buckler and the bow, will be as children's playthings when opposed to the rifle, the rocket, and the mountain howitzer. Still, there are ravines to be traversed not less formidable than the Khyber Pass, and a mob of camp-followers as well as an army of fighting men to be conveyed 400 miles through an unfriendly, if not actively hostile, population. And all this to teach "a great moral lesson" to a mad barbarian, upon whom we imposed our unwelcome friendship, and whom we now seek to punish for acting after the manner of his forefathers, and according to the custom of his country!

JAMES HUTTON.

DIANA GAY

A Novel

BY THE AUTHOR OF "BELLA DONNA," "NEVER FORGOTTEN," ETC. ETC.

Book the First.

CHAPTER VIII. THE RIVALS MEET.

THE *Calthorpe Mercury*, which had many subscribers in that and other adjacent towns, and kept its eye a good deal on the movements of the gentry, soon discovered what was going to take place at Gay Court. "We understand," said the *Mercury*, "that the spirited proprietor of Gay Court intends shortly celebrating the birthday of his accomplished daughter and heiress, Miss Diana Gay, by a series of festivities at his hospitable mansion. Several guests of distinction are expected: among others, the Right Hon. the Lord Bellman and his son, Viscount Chimeleigh; Mr. and Lady Margaret Bowman; Mr. Lugard and Richard Lugard, Esq., 1st (Du Barry's Own) Hussars; Mr. and Mrs. Crowder; Mr. Bligh, barrister-at-law; and others. We understand that Mr. Gay purposes throwing open his princely mansion for a grand ball to the neighbourhood in honour of this most interesting occasion." The *Mercury* "understood" all this, and much more, almost as soon as the scheme had been conceived in the mind of the princely owner. How do *Mercuries* and such organs discover these things? Have they an instinct? or through what channel, above or below, do they attain to their mysterious knowledge? It is known, however, that Mr. Dawkins, footman at Gay Court, on a recent visit to Calthorpe, had been met by a shorthand gentleman, and handsomely treated at the Greyhound Inn.

Miss Diana was in great delight at the prospect. She spent a good deal of time planning and superintending arrangements. A careless remark of her father's, to the effect that there was a good deal of responsibility on her little shoulders *now*, had sunk deep into her mind. The bedrooms lay a good deal on that mind and shoulders; and her forehead contracted a little as she thought, with almost painful anxiety, how so many were to be fitted up with becoming magnificence. Her difficulty was with Mrs. Simms the housekeeper, a lady of generally tightened aspect—in face, figure, and dress; and the tip of whose nose, at moments of contradiction, quivered like a dog's. Of this person our Diana stood in awe, feeling utter helplessness in her presence; and, knowing the lady's indisposition to recognise or even see

any responsibility on Miss Diana's side, that young lady, with much diffidence, prefaced all her wishes with a "Don't you think, Mrs. Simms—" which, according to all known laws of woman, was but inviting cold shakings of head, and a plain "*not* thinking," from a person consulted. She was allowed her way as far as suggestion went; and then the familiar, with a smile of pity, said, "O, never do, miss! You may leave it all to me, miss."

Very grand and extensive preparations were made under more competent superintendence; but her father, carrying out the good-natured fiction of Miss Diana's labours, would say as she came down, "Working on still?—another hard day for my little poodums"—he had a whole vocabulary of these terms of endearment—"she is doing wonders, and becoming quite the mistress of the house." Kisses were of course freely lavished in return for this compliment. Her father showered guineas on her; but her current coin with which she repaid him were kisses; and these payments were given with the abundance with which a sultan would bestow purses of gold.

Still there were matters which Mr. Gay did not exactly trust to that "little head." The two or three best bedrooms were handed over to Messrs. Debenham, the eminent London upholsterers, for redecoration in sumptuous style, not at all in snobbish compliment to the lord who was to occupy them; but such restoration had been put off and off since the days of the late owner, who had partially taken the matter in hand, and then let all decay a good deal, and this seemed a good opportunity.

A *cook* of eminence—a perfect Knight of the Bath, if that answers to a *cordón bleu*—was coming down, with an aide-de-camp or two; and it seemed also a suitable occasion to inaugurate the services of THE NEW BUTLER, *vice* an ancient, useless, and hitherto irremovable retainer, who had held office during the last forty years. That tyrant, for such he was, was aghast at this characteristic ingratitude; made no remark on the matter to Mr. Gay, but excited much terror in Diana's heart, by repeating, half to himself, half to her, "Wait until to-morrow—or next day!"

One morning, when Mr. Gay was out, Diana was told that there was a gentleman wishing to see her in the drawing-room; and that announcement obliging her, as it always did, to dart to the glass adjust hair-bows, &c., with a hasty but sufficient adornment, she fluttered down to see the stranger. It was a tall banker-like-looking gentleman with a gold guard-chain. He was carelessly turning over a photograph-book. He bowed to her. "Miss Gay, I believe? Mr. Chewton, please."

Diana remembered the name, and started with surprise and a little alarm. This caused her to "blurt out" a little ungraciously, "O, the new butler!"

He shivered a little at this calling a spade a spade, but bowed with dignity as one who would have said, "I see you don't mean it." He

said, "I have jest come from Sir Wilson Towers, and I left the kessel this morning."

He saw that this had great effect on Diana; but it was only his manner.

"And—and," she asked in embarrassment, "what would you wish me to do?—what do you want?"

"O, I have jest come—I wished to pay my dooties to the lady of the 'ouse on arrivin',—only the usewl thing; the 'ousekeeper all in good time, m'm. With your leave, we shall put over business till to-morrow. I should be 'ardly equal to dooty to-day, after the journey and all that. I a-sewer you, miss, I felt it a good deal, parting with Sir Wilson and his family. He came down with me to the door, and his last words was, 'Chewton, we part as man and man, with feelings of mewtewl respect on both sides.'"

Diana, as this gentleman withdrew, felt a little chill. She to be mistress!—give *him* orders! Alas, at best she felt she could but submit propositions to him for his opinion and discretion.

Later on that day, which was about a week after the portrait had been presented, Mr. Gay came home boisterously. His hearty voice was heard in the hall, and rang upstairs like a bell. "Where is she?—where's popsy? Are you there, duck? Come down; I have got something here for you."

Diana came running, and saw a strongly-built gentleman, with a fair beard, standing beside her father.

"Who's this fellow?" he said, laughing. "Guess him as you would a riddle. Come, popsy, you know him."

"Ah, to be sure!" said Diana gaily, and putting out her hand; "Robert Bligh! But you're so altered!"

"O," said her father, "there's a cut-and-thrust for you!—unless you say, for the better, ch? Come, say that, or you'll make the man miserable."

"Well," said Diana reflectively, "I do think for the better—a *little* for the better."

"There's for you! He's to dine with us; so see that we have enough to eat, poppet; we depend on you.—I assure you, Bligh, this young lady is beginning to keep the house in order. Only for her, we'd be all at sixes and sevens."

This reminded Diana. "By the bye, papa," she said, "there was a gentleman—I mean the new butler—here."

"A gentleman!—the new butler! Ha, ha, ha!" And Mr. Gay burst into one of his rough laughs. "Where's the fellow? Towers wrote me he was a bit of a swell, but a good servant. Where's the fellow?"

Bligh was looking at her with his thoughtful look. It was some years since he had seen her, and he could not but be struck with the change—the ripening and more womanly air, the little tinge of colour *in the cheek*. As usual, she had on her trinkets.

"What are you looking at me so for?" she said, half seriously. "Do you know, I think you have forgotten me?"

He laughed. "No; only so much has happened since; that is, so much *law* has happened, for that has been my life."

"And you are coming to stay with us? I hope so. There is going to be all sorts of fun."

"Yes," he said; "I came over to say that I would."

"Then it is a long time since you have been here. Would not you like to see the garden and improvements, and *my* garden and new summer-house?"

"O, immensely," said he.

She cast down her eyes demurely. "Then shall I ring and tell them to send the gardener to take you round—he knows all the names, you see, so much better than I do? Or, if you would prefer it, I could get my bonnet—"

The reader will see that our heroine had a kind of faintly mischievous turn, and was subject to little fits of this sort—most perfectly natural—which gave her all the piquancy that was her charm.

Mr. Bligh, looking at her in his thoughtful way, answered her after a moment: "I should like the gardener—and Miss Diana also."

Mr. Bligh therefore, for all his learning and bookishness, did not take everything *au pied de la lettre*.

The young lady got her bonnet, and presently both went away with all that old "common form" of conversation known so long as "going to look at the garden."

Bligh then went home to dress for dinner. As he entered the drawing-room, he saw there were others present; and Mr. Gay, greeting him heartily, as though it was a month since they had parted, took him by the arm with both hands, and led him up.

"There's someone here you should know," he said. "This is a day for old friends. Now, who's this? Look at him."

A slight, fair, good-looking young man was standing by Diana, and looked up. "How do you do, Bligh?" he said warmly. "You remember me?"

Bligh said, "What, Lngard! I am so glad."

Mr. Gay, with Bligh's arm still captured, stood listening to the greeting.

"I say, popsy," he said, "shall we ever forget the last time these two gentlemen met?—I say, Doctor, come over, and I'll tell you as good a thing as you ever heard."

This was to a clergyman, who, to such an appeal and to such a treat held out, could scarcely grudge the trouble of walking across. Mr. Gay had him by the arm too.

"The best thing, Doctor,—as good as a play. Five or six years ago we were at a school on the day when the lads were showing off. You know what they do at Wheeler's?"

"To be sure," said the Doctor; "the exhibition-day."

"Well, Di was in the garden after all was over, and she came on these two, at it ding-dong—a regular duel. High words had passed, and they were giving each other the satisfaction gentlemen expect. Ha, ha! That was the way they parted."

Bligh smiled. "I have often laughed over that," he said.

Mr. Lugard smiled and laughed; but the laugh was a little forced. "I believe it has been said again and again that college victories or defeats are no signs of success in after-life. But it *was* funny, Miss Diana catching us at it so hard and fast. Boys will be boys, you know."

"That *used* to be the case," said the Doctor; "but boys *will* be men, is the new version, it seems to me."

"I can guess what the battle was about," said Mr. Gay in good-humour: "that little coquette there, as she was *then*, had been trying on some of her tricks—this end of the plank up, then down. O, don't tell me; I was watching—eh?"

Bligh struck in eagerly, "No, no; *she* had nothing to do with it; no, indeed!"

Lugard laughed. "I see Bligh is just the same downright fellow he was—out with the truth always, and nothing but the truth."

Dinner was now announced. As they went down, Lugard took the other's arm.

"Well," he said, "so we meet again here. I am so glad. To tell you the truth, I did not expect to find you here. I was told you were grinding away up in town, and that you could not spare half an hour."

"It is very kind of you," said the other warmly, "to say so; and you are not more glad than I am. I was obliged to come here to re-fit. I had been overdoing it a little."

"Sit yourself there, Lugard," said Mr. Gay; "and you, Bligh, on this side. Now we'll see what Mons. Frangsay has done for us. But now, what *was* at the bottom of those fisticuffs? for there is a mystery among you all."

Diana tittered, quite delighted. "Yes, papa, there is; and you are *not* to know."

"I was just going to tell him," said Lugard; "but shall not now, without your leave."

"Come, popsy, say the word; don't let the poor old man famish for want of a secret."

"Well, then," said Miss Diana, with an air of reflecting anxiously, "he may know."

"Why, then," said Lugard, splendidly, "it was all my fault, every bit of it. The fact is, when he said he had got the prize to give pleasure to Mrs. Bligh, I said something about running to his mammy and an old woman. I had never seen Mrs. Bligh then, who, as I have heard, *is anything* but an old woman, and is a very charming person. So it

was a mere general bit of impudence on my part; and I mean to go over to-morrow to pay my respects, and in that way make as handsome an apology as I can."

This generous *amende* excited great admiration. Diana looked over with a little awe, as she always did when there was any chivalry displayed; and Robert Bligh's face glowed with pleasure.

"Indeed you must come," he said; "and I know you will like her."

The dinner was very good and dainty. The artist had not put forth all his strength. He had just given a hint of what he could do, as Meissonier would take up a pen and sketch on a napkin. His palette was not spread as yet.

"I declare," said Mr. Gay, "our friend the *chef* has done very well. Try some of this, Doctor."

Such a delicate dinner, with nothing in the gross, no joints that should have cranes to swing them on the table, but with everything choice. How it stimulated spirits, conversation, everything! There was an alacrity, a spontaneousness. Every eye glanced round the table joyously. In every heart there is that epicure corner. Lugard was in growing spirits. He began to tell of his regiment—its doings, not in the *official* way with which the dining-out story-teller unfolds his stores, but with an easy rambling. Little descriptions and sketches are more entertaining than legends with "points" and "jokes," even though they be "uncommonly good things," or with more vainglorious people, "the best thing you ever heard." He told them of Spring, and of Kilby, their inimitable regimental humorist.

"O," said Diana enthusiastically, "I am told he is the most diverting creature—that he can make you die laughing."

"He! On the contrary, he is the most wearisome fellow. I wish to Heaven we had him out. He's got a suit of old clothes he bought from a man in the street, and he goes about doing a knife-grinder at houses, the stupidest exhibition—really, I am always ashamed of the man."

Diana looked grave at this account, which differed a good deal from the more enthusiastic one given by her friend "Kitty." So differently do things strike different minds.

"That was the man you were talking of having here, dear," said her father. "Never mind, we'll have him here; he'll amuse the servants."

Then Mr. Lugard gave other sketches and details of their barrack-life, which were gay and interesting: how they were still going on persecuting that young child Poole, filling his boots with wet sand, making apple-pies in his bed, and other such annoyances. The last and most ingenious device was perching a small tin can of water just over his door, with a string connecting it with the door-handle; so that when he came home at night in the dark, a watery Jupiter descended on his head in a shower of block-tin, and hurt him severely.

This was Mr. Bligh's classical illustration, which, however, was only "taken" by Mr. Gay and the Doctor.

"That," said Lugard, "was pushing things too far; for the poor boy's head was all cut and bleeding, and he was quite stunned; and though I had put sand, and his own tooth-brushes mixed, in his boots, I think this was not fair; and so I told the fellows. But Spring and Cadby are always at this childish work; and last night the poor lad came running in to me for protection. So I told them I wouldn't have it, and it must be stopped, or I'd bring it before the colonel; and so I shall."

Magnanimous Lugard! protecting the weak, helping the helpless!—so we may suppose he appeared to our Diana. And it must be said he told his little narrative, not with any view of showing off, but just to amuse the company.

"A most proper feeling on your part, sir," said the Clergyman warmly, "and does you great credit. The young man might have been driven to self-destruction."

Lugard then continued rambling pleasantly. Now about Colonel Rigby, a youngish colonel, who went on his good looks, and fancied the ladies were sighing for him. "Which indeed they are, I believe," adds Lugard.

And Mr. Gay says on that: "I don't know a pleasanter berth than that of an unmarried colonel. He is positively hunted, my dear. Even the married old stout weather-beaten fellows with great (I beg their pardon) 'whacking' wives, like big troopers in their own regiment—you remember Mrs. MacPhairson, popsykins; I thought she could swallow up my little woman altogether—we know what swells they are."

So Lugard went on, bringing out his little military figures and scenery with very good effect. The scarlet side of society is seductive enough: it has a theatrical air; its gold and colours and *fanfares* are grateful to the eye; and the air which the consciousness of their trappings inspires, the haughtiness, *insouciance*, and superiority which is *de rigueur* with the military all the world over, excites curiosity and respect, if it does not attract. It is the most spectacular of professions, and beside it the colours of the other seem to fade and grow dull.

Robert Bligh listened for a long time with great interest to these details. Lugard rose in his spirits, grew more voluble and communicative in his way, laughed loud and long, and became exuberant. No wonder the Doctor said, as he was going that night, that there was a *fund* of nature in that young man that was sure to carry him over every difficulty in life.

"And fly them, too," said Mr. Gay, "without touching a stone."

But suddenly Bligh, who was naturally a silent man, and always required a sort of privacy and encouragement to bring out his gifts, looked over at Diana, and saw her stealing one of her half-shy, half-

reverent looks at Lugard; and this look, so full of admiration for such gifts, roused him from his inaction. The image of Mrs. Bligh, sitting up at home, with her lamp beside her, waiting for him to enter and tell the whole progress of the night, presented itself. He knew that even that moment, though she was with her book, her thoughts were wandering over to that little dinner, and speculating "how Robert was getting on;" or she had put her book away, and was walking up and down impatiently, with her hands joined behind her. So, waiting for the next opening, he struck in with something about his *own* profession. But our Bligh had not that taste for "shunting" conversation off on to another line, which indeed requires a pointsman of the very neatest touch.

"I don't know why," he said at last, "that taste for practical joking should belong to the army alone. We don't find it in either of the other professions. There must be some special reason."

Lugard was just opening off with a sketch of a certain major who had dined with them not long before, but was checked by this remark.

"A bit of philosophical inquiry," he said. "I see, Doctor Syntax still goes on."

"Doctor Syntax!" said Mr. Gay; "what about him?"

Diana knew the name and tittered; and the Doctor saying it was a most humorous bit of buffoonery, though a little profane in parts, she laughed still more.

"Only a bit of old school-days," said Lugard, smiling from the feeling that he was "leading the house" still. "Shall I tell? We used to call our friend there Doctor Syntax, he was so much wiser than any of us,—a term of respect, you see,—and from all the little boys who were behindhand with their lessons running to him to help them."

"Well, and I think it was uncommon good-nature of him to do so," said Mr. Gay heartily; "and if so, it was a compliment."

Miss Diana's face, which was like a delicate weather-glass during a conversation, and reflected every change, was here turned to Bligh with deep sympathy. For with this young lady the story of anything generous or good had always the deepest interest, and stirred her heart.

Then Lugard said quickly, "Indeed that's true, and I myself have come to him in my distresses and difficulties; though I *believe*," added he, with a sly look round the table, "I showed him a little too much of the weak points, especially during the last quarter—eh, Bligh? He was so quiet and shrewd, we never dreamed he was using his eyes all the time."

There again was a point against that gentleman; for though the speech was in jest, somehow it seemed to help to explain that old defeat a little.

Bligh coloured. "*I should scorn such conduct*," he said warmly;

"even as a school-boy I always told the little I knew with just the one object—just to help those who came to me."

"Surely I *said* so," said Lugard, "and said it as handsomely as I could. My dear fellow, you don't want it illuminated and engrossed on vellum, and signed and sealed—I admit the old obligations. Mr. Gay, you didn't meet Bateman the general? That reminds me. He requires everything by letters: in fact we call him Old Put-it-in-writing. I assure you I have asked him a thing, and he has agreed; and when I was going away he calls out, 'By the way, you'd better put that in writing.' And if you didn't, he'd say afterwards he had no official knowledge of it. It is quite common to hear our fellows: 'Where are you going, Cadby?' 'Only just up to Old Put-it-in-writing.' Ha, ha! I beg your pardon, Bligh; you're not a bit like him; and I didn't mean to say you were. But somehow, what we were saying just suggested Bateman."

CHAPTER IX.

FIRST CHECK.

Now the young officer caracoled gaily and pleasantly on his light pony, and Robert Bligh saw that his solid conversational cob could not do more than amble heavily after. So with a sigh he felt he must be content with this indifferent progress. After all, "Common Sense" and "Very-well-informed" are very dowdy, housekeeper-looking women, whom we may respect for their virtue and propriety; but they are dull company compared with the flashy grisettes whom we call Nonsense and Folly.

"Come, Lugard," said Mr. Gay, "what name did they give you? You had one as well as the rest—out with it. At my school we had a fellow they called *Ratstails*."

Diana laughed at this notion. "O papa!" she said.

"No invention, I assure you, popsy.—Come, Mr. Bligh, what was his?"

"Not a very pleasant one," said Lugard in a sort of affected confusion. "*Pan*—what do you think of that, Miss Diana?"

"Odious!" said the young lady. "What does it mean?"

"You remember that," said Lugard, appealing to Bligh. "It was Pan at this end of the playground—Pan here, Pan there. I used to be sick of it."

"But what was the fun of it?" said Mr. Gay; "was it after the god—the fellow with the pipes?"

"No:—short for *Panther*. The fellows said I used to spring like one. Absurd!" Here, again, he affected deprecation. But still the epithet was complimentary and even romantic, holding the associations of the glossy brilliant coat, his lithe figure, and graceful spring. So here Lugard "scored" once more.

Now the ladies retired; that is, Diana rose and fluttered to the door, smiling and tittering, and then passed Mr. Lugard, who was holding it open, and who had a mysterious interview with her—his head outside in the hall, his figure inside with the gentlemen, and who came back to his seat smiling. Then the wine went round, and they talked wisdom and politics—which is of course wisdom—and soon introduced “the finest horse in the kingdom,” an animal surprisingly common, and which everyone has seen or heard of a good many times in his life. On the shaking out the folds of this equine banner a cordiality and unanimity set in which no other subject could have invited.

“Bellman and I were schoolfellows,” said Mr. Gay; “and I am so glad to have him here. I want to show him we have a horse in these parts; for he is rather sore about a couple he got from a dealer, and which belonged to poor Freeman before he broke up. With all his money—and he was liberal enough of it, God knows—poor Freeman would do you in a horse if he could.”

“Lord bless you!” cried Lugard in his impetuous way, “every man—the greatest saint among us—feels inclined to do that, if the opportunity comes.”

“Dear me!” said the Clergyman in a soft surprise, “how amazing that is! The old Adam, I suppose—always the old Adam.”

Bligh had his brow bent and his expression of thought on.

“It is *very* curious, all that,” he said; “and I am sure quite just. I wonder could it be explained in this way, that defects in a horse are so much of a moral sort, that the warranty can be stretched a good deal; just as about human character, and—”

“O, listen to Doctor Syntax!” said Lugard boisterously, and standing up to pat his hands on Bligh’s shoulders. “See him coming down on us with his hard logic. Now he was going to say, like the way mammas will tell nothing about the temper, &c. of their daughters, but warrant them to any extent. For shame, Bligh.”

“Indeed—” began Bligh, smiling gravely.

“Putting ladies and horses on a level—such a coarse idea! I suppose, sir, the next thing will be to have regularly-appointed ‘Vets’—matrimonial vets—who for ten-and-six will lift up their lips, put their fingers on their teeth—O shame! Ha, ha, ha!”

“Ha, ha, ha!” laughed Mr. Gay, with his strong lusty laugh of enjoyment. Lugard was gone. This was a specimen of his “spirits,” and he was fond of boisterously constructing such far-fetched sets of opinions for friends and giving them some such absurd development.

“A cheerful fellow,” said Mr. Gay. “No fear of his not getting on. He’d walk up to the biggest swell of them all, just as he’d walk up to a cannon; and the first requires more courage, I can tell you. The two of them upstairs will be knocking up some fun, I can tell you.”

Bligh had looked uneasily after him as he left the room. He could

not do such. Mr. Gay would have stopped *him*, and brought him back; or, if he had persisted, would have thought it "free and easy rather, in another man's house." But there are happy people in the world, who have the art of getting doors opened, obtaining admission into private grounds, reserved seats, &c. They have *manner*, which is better than a purse, and save certainly fifty per cent of their income. But now Bligh joined in these praises with infinite warmth.

"O, he is sure to get on; he is so ready—never at a loss. It was just the way at school. Not one of us could say the things to the Doctor he could."

"Ah, yes; ah, yes," said the Clergyman in his plaintive voice; "very true. There are persons in our profession of—er—that sort, who, I am afraid, use those means to push themselves."

"Ah, we could name a few, eh?" said Mr. Gay—"Doctor P., and our friend A. the vicar of M. Help yourself:—no more? Come, come, we must finish this, and no excuse."

When they at last went up to the drawing-room, they saw Miss Diana and Mr. Lugard far off in the next room at the piano. She was busy teaching that gentleman to play a little *patois* air she had picked up abroad. Lugard was playing, and the young lady was standing by, correcting and chiding with mock impatience. Lugard, indeed, knew little more than his notes, and could only "strum."

"Here," he said, starting up, "sing it for the company—come."

The Doctor came softly and slowly gliding in, with that smiling diffidence which gentlemen assume after dinner. "O, do let us hear it," he said.

"Come, popsy, tune that sweet little fiddle of yours," said her father. "Sing us the *Sarabande*."

"O, papa," said Diana, "you know I don't sing before people, and Mr. Robert Bligh such a judge."

But she began nevertheless, with a very small child-like touch, and, it must be said, a little straggling in the harmonies; but still the air was pretty, and the voice very sweet:

"O, la Sarabande,
J'ai la vu danser."

At the end Lugard good-humouredly took Bligh by the shoulders.

"Come, you severe fellow, what have you to find fault with in *that*? Can you pick a flaw, demurrer—anything against the rules, eh? If you only saw him, Miss Diana, with his judicial eye on you, waiting for a false note."

Diana tossed her head until her trinkets jingled again. "He is quite welcome, I am sure," she said.

At last they were going away.

"Recollect, Doctor, you are booked to us on Monday—our first day—no excuses. We shall have a little fun. Of course I only say it

in the name of popsy here, who is mistress and empress, and all that. —Eh, Dinah duck, won't you invite the Doctor?"

Diana made him a very graceful and queen-like curtsey, and said gravely, "I hope Doctor will honour us with his company on Monday next."

Lugard and Bligh went home together part of the way. Lugard had his "trap," and would drop his friend.

"Here is a good cigar for you too," he said; "and I want to talk to you as we go along. I can drive and talk. What did you think of this evening? Charming house. I like the very atmosphere of it—even that rough, good-natured, and genuine father. Nothing old-fashioned about him too, except his heartiness and kindness. And that piquant lively little Diana; though I don't know why we call her little—she's not little. By the way, I don't think you enjoyed the night so much. You had some Contingent Remainder or knotty point running through your head. I watched you several times. She said so too."

"Not at all," said Bligh a little warmly. "You are always saying something of that sort—that I am judicial, or wise, or full of common sense, when I am not thinking of such a thing."

Lugard laughed and touched his horse complacently with his whip.

"I thought that was all your way, and that it was the highest compliment. Well, I must mind for the future. Don't you find her improved, and yet much the same as she was when we saw her last? I am glad she has not lost that native—that *naïveté*. Native *naïveté*: come now, you're going to say that's cacophonous—isn't that the word? But I forgot. Do you know, my dear Syntax—you must let me call you that for old times and old schoolfellowship—"

"To be sure," said Bligh good-humouredly; "only not before people. It makes one a little absurd."

"But it will slip out. I say, what an enviable position that girl has!—not a trouble, not a shadow of a care—everything is happiness, everything at her feet—a devoted father; houses, horses, happiness; lands, tenements, and hereditaments, eh, Doctor?—all hers. Do you know," he said suddenly—"shall I tell you a little secret? My father, who is as clever a man as there is in the three kingdoms, has laid it out; and I believe will manage it. There, sir."

"Manage what?—not Miss Diana!"

"Yes, the very thing. I shouldn't object seriously, if I laid my mind to it regularly—in fact, the foundation is laid. Girls of her nature—light, airy—they flutter on to us, and our gaudy leaves and petals, like butterflies on to flowers. There's poetry for you. I mean we soldiers, with our golden clothes, &c., have a pull—you know it. I confess I should like a pretty trinket."

Lugard felt his companion move impatiently beside him.

"But are you so sure, Lugard?" he said. "I don't think you

quite know her character. Under all that which you call lightness I see a great deal of sense and principle, which only wants the occasion to come out. A pretty trinket!—she is much more than that, Lugard. I never like to hear girls spoken of in that way.”

“O my!” said Lugard; “this is quite heroic. Pray who spoke of them in that way? You see I was right in saying to her that you are so practical—you *do* take things *au pied de la lettre*. I see I must weigh my words with you, Master Bligh.”

“No, I didn’t mean that,” said Bligh. “Only I think you suppose the thing to be easier than it is.”

“That of course is to be seen,” said Lugard coldly. “I may as well tell you that I intend taking up the business seriously; so I warn off all intruders. Ha, ha! Tell your friends, my dear Doctor. I know what Gay’s notion is in getting Bellman and his donkey of a son. But still, if mademoiselle set her heart on a thing, I rather think we must let her have her own way. My father has managed more difficult things than that. Here’s your gate, and I see a light over the wall. Your good mother is sitting up for you—to *hear all about it*, ha, ha! But mind, not a word about our secret. Mind, I’ll count on your help a little, old boy. Good-night, old fellow; take care of yourself!”

Robert Bligh was set down at the gate, and as he rang, one of those rapid sweeps of thought, which stretch as far as what the Eastern saw in the tub of water, passed through his mind. The conclusion was, as the door opened, “It is absurd, hopeless, ridiculous!—a mere mother’s dream; the idea of *my* slow-moving mind hobbling after his brilliant soul. It is the most childish notion in the world.”

As the door opened, he saw his mother standing in the hall, tall and shadowy.

“Come in, dear,” she said; “sit down and tell me all about it—about *the first move*.”

Robert felt a twinge at his heart. Mother and son sat down together on the sofa.

“This is new life to me, waiting for you in this way. After all, what is there like life and affection, and flesh and blood? I used to try and persuade you that books were the only things having no malice, hatred, or unkindness. The worst is, I only find this out with every day I grow older. Now, Robert dear, report.”

She was looking at him anxiously.

“Well, you know, mother,” he said, taking her hand, “nothing could be done on a first night.”

“Nothing?” she said quickly; “everything! It is the things that take time which never succeed. That pottering is the sure way to fail. You have double the chance when you go at it at once. But you have not lost time. I know your quiet sure way when you have the ground to yourself. Come, begin at the beginning; tell me the dinner—I *always* like to hear that.”

Bligh turned slowly to her.

"You see," he said softly, "I had *not* the ground to myself."

"Why who—" she said, starting, "who was there? tell me—quick."

"Only Lugard—Dick, my old schoolfellow."

"What, the officer? O, I see! Well, of course it couldn't be helped. Now, tell about it."

"My dear mother," he said quickly, "you know what you were talking of before I went out. I did not take it up perhaps so warmly as you wished. But I see now it is hopeless—not to be thought of in any way."

She rose up slowly from the sofa, and said hastily:

"So I see you have done nothing—attempted nothing! Is that your spirit? Is that what you would dare tell a client in a desperate case? I am ashamed of you, to come back to me with such a child's story. What are you good for? Who are you afraid of? An empty-headed subaltern—because he is dressed up like any scrubby actor, and is daubed over with gold lace? Heaven help us!"

She was walking up and down, stamping about with her hands joined behind her. Her son was not at all surprised at this burst; he was accustomed to it.

"You know, mother," he said, "I have not the gifts for this line. As far as a brief goes—"

"Yes, a wretched few guineas—yes, there's the narrow view! When can I teach you to get rid of this miserly view? Precious years of your life wasted in scraping this pittance, when you might by a single stroke win all. What does your history tell you? Has it not been the game of all the great men? Your wretched tradesmen and manufacturers like Crowder, it may do for them for scraping money. But where are they at the end of their life? My dearest Robert," she said, changing her tone into softening, and sitting down beside him, "I seem to speak harshly, but it is for your good; I want to rouse you. So I suppose you were put back by that coxcomb? Tell me the truth."

"Why," said he, "it was so, mother. I have not the knack. He is so much readier. I am too 'heavy,' and—and—I can see she cares for him."

"And *you* are imposed on by such things! I am astonished at you," she said, again starting up and beginning to walk; "why a skilful man would—Ah, I see what I must do! My great lawyer-son wants confidence out of his court or chambers. He must have his old mamma at his elbow to whisper him. I must take it in hand myself, I see."

He smiled. "That would be no use either, mother."

"You don't know; you must *try*, my dear boy. You don't know the first principles. Whatever the woman may be, whatever she thinks of you, she will be flattered by a man's preference, whatever that man may be. Is not that something to start with? Fools at a ball skulk by the wall, and say, '*She has too grand partners. She will not look at*

me if I ask her.' If she sees *you* think so, *she* will think so. The wise fellow goes up straight and confidently, and is taken. I tell you, Robert, we have a basis here, which no one else has, and which I cannot tell you, at least for some time—There!" He started. "Yes," she said, "an advantage over all comers. But I see the old mamma must step in. I suppose I must go to Gay Court, and stop there awhile."

"Do, mother," he said eagerly; "we should be all so glad."

"Not all," she said, smiling, "as you shall see. At any rate, we must start again. Now to your bed."

And with a smile and an air of exultation she passed out of the room, leaving her son, who, as usual, remained a long time in thought.

CHAPTER X.

THE HUNT.

Now at last had come round the great evening, and the *Colthorpe Mercury* was able to announce,—could there have been a decent excuse it would have added, "BY SPECIAL TELEGRAM,"—that the distinguished visitors had arrived at Gay Court. Previously they had been "favoured" by a private view of the new state bedrooms, now being got up "in the most costly manner and the most exquisite taste," by that enterprising monster firm, Messrs. Debenham. The chief one had been "sumptuously upholstered" in what they described as *bleu-de-roi tabouret*—another in chintz "of the rarest finish." In short, our reporter—who had been introduced surreptitiously and shown over the whole by a pantry-friend—was quite dazzled.

Mr. Gay laughed loudly as he read his *Mercury*.

"These poor devils must earn their crust, I suppose. But where do they get their fine names? *Bleu de roi!*—why, it is only the ordinary blue stuff they hang up. Of course, I shall have a fine bill to pay."

At last the *Mercury* was enabled to announce, "All the distinguished persons who have been invited to Gay Court to celebrate an interesting anniversary have arrived. Among those at present enjoying the sumptuous hospitality of the large-hearted host are, the Right Hon. Lord Bellman; the Hon. Mr. Chimeleigh and suite; Mr. and Lady Margaret Bowman, Canning Bowman, Esq., of the Foreign Office; — Lugard, Esq., of Burton, Richard Lugard, Esq., of her Majesty's Hussars; Robert Bligh, Esq., Mrs. Bligh; Major Spring, and Miss Crowder of the Priory. It is rumoured that still more distinguished company is expected, and that Gay Court will be the scene of festivities rivalling in brilliancy and beauty the most gorgeous dreams of the *Arabian Nights*."

"Pish!—gorgeous dreams of my grandmother!" said Mr. Gay impatiently, as he read. "I wish to God they'd leave us alone."

The reader will see that this quotation, though it does come from a country-town "print," saves us a world of description, narrative, &c., *and has, in fact,* carried us over a handsome space of ground.

Gay Court was really bright with all its new finery; the *bleu-de-roi ponceau* was hung; the French cook was ready; Mr. Chewton was, as it were, standing to arms; and that Monday evening Mr. Gay's private omnibus had taken away from the station the noble persons, Lord Bellman and his son, Mr. Chimeleigh and suite (no more than a single valet). The select and distinguished party had assembled at dinner to meet them, though not the full strength of the company, who were to come and dine on the next day, after the hunt was over.

What was the secret of this excitement about my lord? He was but a very ordinary pattern of peer, and in the county we had already the Earl of Cumberley, Lord Killeries, and Lord Bayswater, whom we might draw on again, discount, and cash when the occasion served. The truth was, that now, after a long term of receivers, Court-of-Chancery trustees, the Freeman estates had come into the market. For a long time back, the *Mercury* had been hearing that "a distinguished nobleman, remarkable for his success in bucolic pursuits," had been making inquiries about the Freeman lands; and presently the *Mercury* began to hint that, though matters were not "ripe," and it might be "premature" to ventilate the name, there could be no harm to say that it was Lord B——n whom popular rumour pointed to as likely "to come among us" very soon. And very soon the same authority had discovered that all was well-nigh complete, and that the Freeman estate was about to change hands.

The only drawback was, that there was no residence on the estate; so that there was no prospect of having so desirable a resident as Lord Bellman as a neighbour. But they did not know that Mr. Gay was equally eager to secure the new-comer; and this might have been a good deal of the secret of all this fuss and preparation; for he knew that if his lordship was pleased with the hunting, and fancied the place, he was just the man to give orders to have a good house built, and come and live there.

It was Tuesday morning, and the company were dropping down to an early breakfast, spread festively and artistically under Mr. Chewton's own eye. That gentleman had stood many minutes at the bottom of the table, with his head on one side, and that "hown hye" closed as if he was looking through a telescope, but was satisfied. From its own way, he thought a table was a thing of beauty, which, indeed, everything done on the most perfect principles is, to a certain extent.

It was early—a fine fresh hunting-morning. It had rained a little overnight, as his lordship made his august progress in the private omnibus. Hunting-men had gone to bed uneasy lest this might turn to a sharp frost; for the glass was not satisfactory. However, here was the morning itself—a gentlemanly, well-behaved, proper sort of morning, with the ground just soft enough to be velvety, and not soaked into a fatal bog condition. From the row of tall parlour-windows the thick evergreens and the rolling banks of grass looked

rich and green and refreshed after their pleasant bath. The meet was to be at eleven o'clock, on the lawn; for his lordship wished to have a long, hearty, and satisfactory day.

Both sides of the table were lined, and it was a gay, cheerful, inspiring scene, a little different from the interment-like gloom that sometimes attends a country-house breakfast. What would the reporter of the *Mercury* have given to be allowed to peep in, even to enter now and again with the cream, game, &c., in the undignified disguise of a waiter!—a thing no pantry-interest could accomplish. Yet he was not a hundred yards away, hanging about the lawn with the rest of the crowd. A whole column in the *Mercury* will by and by give us ample details of “THE MEET AT GAY COURT.”

Now we see Lord Bellman beside Diana, who is presiding with infinite grace, and not a little confusion, and looks so tiny and quite fairy-like in her habit as she stands up and fills out tea for everyone: for Mr. Gay, in defiance of Mr. Chewton's respectful protest, will *not* have that cheering beverage made wholesale, hotel-fashion, at a neighbourly side-table, and served round as if it was an *entrée*.

(Mr. Chewton fairly introduced the name of a “Lord Northfleet,” when he had gone down special for one of his lordship's open-house parties; but without effect.)

“I like that putting away the joints out of sight,” said Mr. Gay to Lord Bellman; “though, mark my words, we'll be coming back to that as a fashion; and we'll have the ladies crying out, ‘How nice it is to see the saddle of mutton, and have your slice cut off before your eyes!’ But the tea-making is the only link between the host and his guests; and my little pootens there wouldn't give it up for the world, would she, topsy?”

“I think it such fun, papa,” said Miss Diana, filling hard away. “Come here, Mr. Bligh, and hand that down *yourself* to Lady Margaret; and if you spill a drop—”

Lord Bellman was a tall, good-looking nobleman of about fifty, with black sleek hair divided in the middle, and a pointed American beard. He had been a very handsome man in his time, and was still remarkable for his fine even rows of teeth. He was a country lord; ardent about stock, butter, and turnips, with which he mixed up hunting and Whig politics. Every farming man remembers the year when his lordship's brindled bull, “Great Tom,” took the cup at the All-England Show, beating the Earl of Wickfield's beast—considered unmatched in size, weight, and all brutish qualifications. Everyone will remember his lordship's speech on the Labouring-Classes Dwelling Bill, which he brought in himself, and passed through the House of Peers, but which, when it went down to another place, was strangled. He had at one time formed part of the Ministry, and had been at the Board-of-Trade ten months. But the short-horns and the fine hunting

try in which he lived drew him irresistibly away; and no man can

serve those three agreeable masters, sporting and farming and politics, at the same time. Politics is the narrowest-minded and most greedily selfish of the three. But he took them up fitfully and almost alternately: his present hope and aim was to get an earldom; it being said "he had strong claims on the party;" and he would have been very well content had he become Earl of Belltowers.

Mr. Chimeleigh was also present—of about five-and-twenty years old; an unhealthy-looking youth, with a very sharp pink nose, of which some of his friends, with more liveliness than courtesy, said "he could slice melons with." He, too, was a politician—a "sucking" one, those same free friends remarked—and did not care in the least for the short-horns or the farming. He could hunt genteelly; and his father said "he was a knowing young Whig, and would feather his nest one of these days." Older members of the party were accustomed to prophesy wisely in the same spirit; and the country paper, in a sort of divine *afflatus*, said it was easy to see that he was "marked out" as one of the rising men who would be at the helm of the State. Poor helm! how many clumsy fingers have closed upon that well-worn piece of timber! He spoke very little, eating his breakfast in a measured business-like way, as through a small section of public affairs; and was fond of taking senator-like airs. He was to go into Parliament; and there was a little borough in the great hunting country, where it was thought his father's interest could have placed him; but his health was bad, and doctors had prescribed a two-years' voyaging and travelling to make him strong, before entering on political life. Some of the friends said of him, "Clever young man; head like a book; chapter and verse for everything! *He'll* cut a figure." While others—the free friends—said, "You might put all Chimeleigh's brains into a little gallipot, and have room to spare!" Both opinions were extreme and a little extravagant.

Lord Bellman was a most voluble talker. Conversation with *him* was practically making a speech. He had his glass to his eye.

"That's you, I see, Gay. Who did it? Too much of the red, I should say. Do you know it's uncommonly hard to get a coat done?—because it *is* the coat merely that is done. I know a young fellow, exceedingly promising, who is coming up in this hunting way, and knows how to do a horse's head. If I had known, I could have got him, and he'd have been about the same. He did Pownall for the Crewe Hunt, on his black cob; quite a Vandyke thing, I assure you."

"Well, I'll tell you the reason they had *him* to do my figure," began Mr. Gay.

"Not but that's very fair," went on his lordship, screwing his glass into his eye; "very fair indeed, too fiery, though—far too fiery! What's this—post, ch?"

Mr. Chewton was entering with a beadle-like air; his hands full of letters *carefully sorted*, and which he considered he distributed with

infinite grace and courtly effect. He came formally to the top of the table, where he laid down a packet, nicely assorted in sizes, beside Lord Bellman, with a half-whispered and most obsequious "My lord." He looked round the table, doing the same to everyone. In this office he was considered, by his dependents and admirers, to be unmatched.

Lord Bellman glanced at them one by one, finishing his tea, toast, &c. as he did so; and only indicating the probable contents by side-long looks, pursings of his mouth (tea-cup being suspended), and upliftings of his eyebrows. At last he pitched on one, opened it, and read it.

"Well," he said, "this is from Stephenson; everything clear, all plain-sailing; submitted it to counsel, made searches, and all that. We're to sign at once."

"What! Freeman's estate?" said Mr. Gay heartily. "I'm so glad; I'm delighted to hear it. I didn't like asking you, for I was afraid; and I was wanting to see how you'd like the place.—Di, popsy, listen to this!—May I tell her?"

"Now what is it, papa? If it's a secret, I won't keep it."

"Only about Freeman's estate, Miss Diana, which is all virtually my property now. I am to be one of the powers that be of this county."

"O, I am so glad, Lord Bellman; but you must promise to build a house, or we sha'n't care for you at all."

"O, I shall come down occasionally to look after the people, get in my rents, and all that."

"Indeed you must do no such thing, Lord Bellman. We won't have any absentee people spoiling our county, getting all they can out of it, and doing nothing. No, no," said Diana, tossing her head; "we won't have you on those terms at all."

"Diana, popsy! D'ye hear her lecturing his lordship—bringing him to book, like the—"

"I am quite serious, papa," she went on, composing her lips into a grave expression; "I don't approve of it at all. Property has its duties as well as its rights; and you know those poor people in Ireland—"

"O, what have we here?" said his lordship in great good-humour. "A Radical—a real Radical! For shame, Gay, to bring up your children in this way!"

"I think," said Miss Diana, "the Radicals are the nicest people in the world. I hope we shall have a republic in England before long; it would be such fun. Do you recollect, papa, the handsome young man we met in the train going to London, and who told such pleasant stories? He said he was a Radical."

"Yes," said Mr. Gay, who was inclined to run into grave narrative on any hint; "I assure you, as agreeable and pleasant a fellow as I'd ask to see; quite a gentleman, I assure you, Bligh—manner, dress, bearing, information—everything."

"And he had eyes, hair, nose, and a real head, hadn't he, papa?" said Miss Diana, with a sly look to both sides of the table.

listen to her!" said Mr. Gay, delighted. "Did you hear *that* at her poor old daddy? Well, after that I'll say no more. me, it's getting late! See the country fellows looking in w?—hang their impudence! Diana, my pet, you should friends in order."

're very forward," she said, and fluttered over to the window, opened.

mpany followed her slight figure and the folds of her habit, aimed behind her.

way, Tom Holden," she said. "I am very angry with you ; no business to be there; I won't have it!" Then she came L. "See how they obey me!" she said.

arty broke up. In a half-hour there was a curious scene of the house. It seemed as if there was to be a meeting, and re assembled to hear addresses. There were a couple of open drawn up; an Irish outside car; at least a dozen horses being and fro; and a whole crowd of retainers, who pretend to in some way. From the windows of Gay Court looked out s, gentle and simple—but more simple—which, with white broom or two faintly visible behind, betrayed the suspended the housemaid. There was plunging of hoofs and crunch-avel; the broad steps were crowded with many figures, and with abundant and cheerful scarlet; while the air was perth the morning cigar, and made melodious with the light voices. The meet was half a mile away, at what was called arse Cover." The young men are pleasantly leaning against of the steps, when suddenly out strides Mr. Gay, in his scarlet white breeches and shining boots, to take the command. m come the distinguished guests; and our Diana told later y a titter how she had distinctly heard from the crowd, hot be the lard." That nobleman was considered to affect ; unsportsmanlike appearance in his dress, which was only a away coat, with buff-leather breeches and short black boots. on public occasions became energetic and vigorous.

7, look alive," he said, "and bring forward Father John!" moment a strong brown creature, well drawn together, short ood shoulders, and small head, but with fast solid quarters, well-bent hock which is the true merit of the hunter. A d Father John forward, who advanced with a wise and com-meanour, with no pricking of the ears or startings—a sober e man, who knew he must reserve himself for the day's work m. In his own native land Father John would have been as he walked with many a muttered "Ah, begorra! see !—that's the fine crather intirely!" ndeed!" said his lordship, drawing on his gloves and measuring ally. "*He promises well.*"

In a moment he was in the saddle, sitting "like a true man," said someone in the crowd; then gathering up the reins and ambling in the regular hunter's jog-trot.

Then came D'Orsay, very satiny in his coat, but wild-eyed as usual, and foolishly pricking up his ears and starting at every sound. Diana tripped down the steps, daintily holding her habit. Bligh was at the door, looking with interest at the proportions of Father John—for he had an eye for a horse as much as for a point of law. He did not see Miss Diana looking back for the expected attention. Suddenly she whipped her skirt a little impatiently.

"Mr. Bligh!—well, sir, am I to climb up myself?"

He started and came down. Miss Diana laid her hand on the saddle. Bligh stooped; but D'Orsay was fretful and out of humour that morning—the bustle and arriving of horses during the night had disturbed him and put him out, as it would have a human dandy who had come home from a ball. Bligh in his eagerness, and perhaps awkwardness, to retrieve his inattention, swung up Miss Diana a little too quickly, and D'Orsay swerving away, she came to the ground again.

"You did that on purpose," she said; "you are thinking of something else."

A cheery voice called out behind, "My dear good Bligh, I saw you do that. One would think it was a volume of Chitty you were putting up on a shelf. But let me now; please do. Don't be restive."

There is a precious sort of obstructive manner which will be good-humouredly obstinate, and puts away such pressure as this. Others without this charm have to give way or hold possession in a rude boorish way. Bligh made a faint protest, and chose the former.

"That's a good man. Now we'll try again. D'Orsay is scared with all this company. Poor fellow! Let us soothe him first. Poor fellow!" And Diana's delicate hand and a great buckskin glove were travelling over the dandy's neck with most grateful effect. "Now we'll try." And in a second Diana had fluttered up like a bird, and had perched ever so lightly on the small saddle.

Bligh admired her thus, when D'Orsay, now in good-humour, began to move off in a playful canter.

"That's the way to do it," called out Lugard. "We'll teach this lawyer in time. Now," he added, taking his friend affectionately by the arm, "to get our own nags. At these show-gatherings they potter away such a lot of valuable time." This was a favourite method of treatment with Mr. Lugard: after he had, as he called it, put aside his man, he made up for it by a profusion of almost blandishments. They were up in a moment. The ladies had got into the carriages and on cars with the non-hunting gentlemen, and presently everyone drove away.

BELGRAVIA

JANUARY 1868

DEAD-SEA FRUIT

J. Nobel

BY THE AUTHOR OF "LADY AUDLEY'S SECRET," ETC.

CHAP. XVII. MR. DESMOND TO THE RESCUE.

LAURENCE DESMOND had received a whole packet of invitations to country-houses where Christmas was to be kept with something of the traditional warmth and joviality, and with ample entertainment in the way of carpet-dances, and amateur concerts, and private theatricals, with impromptu comedies in the style popular at that Italian theatre which was so dangerous a rival to the house of Molière. But to all such invitations Mr. Desmond had returned the same kind of answer. The laborious duties of the *Pallas* kept him prisoner in town, and would so keep him throughout the winter.

The stern truth was, that Mr. Desmond dared not indulge any natural yearnings for jovial hunting breakfasts, or private theatricals, or country gatherings of pretty girls and hard-riding young men. He was bound to devote all Christmas leisure to the society of Mrs. Jerminham. The lady received her share of invitations from the chiefs of those very houses to which Mr. Desmond was bidden, but elected to refuse all.

"I do not care to be stared at and gossiped about, as if I were some kind of natural curiosity," she said, when she discussed the subject with her friend. "The men watch you with malicious grins whenever you are decently civil to me, and the women watch me with more intense malice whenever you talk to other women. There are times when we are compelled to walk upon red-hot ploughshares, and then of course, *noblesse oblige*, we must tread the iron with a good grace. But I don't see why we should go out of our way to find the ploughshares."

"My dear Emily, you insist on looking at every thing in this bitter spirit."

"I know the world in which I live."

VOL. IV.

"I think the world has been extremely gracious to you."

"Perhaps so; but the world has taken care to let me know that I am accepted on sufferance. Your position in literature, and Mr. Jerningham's fortune, sustain a platform for me, but it is a slippery platform at best. I am happier in my own house than anywhere else."

"But unhappily you are not happy in your own house."

"At any rate, I am less miserable."

Mr. Desmond shrugged his shoulders. He felt that his burden was growing heavier day by day, but he could not find it in his heart to be hard upon this beautiful woman, whose worst error was to love him with a jealous, suspicious love that made her own torment and his.

And by and by, when the demon of discontent had been exorcised, Mrs. Jerningham grew animated and gracious, and put on her sweetest smiles for the man she loved.

"You will spend Christmas-day with me, Laurence, will you not?" she pleaded. "I suppose I shall be honoured by your society on that day *at least*."

The little, piteous air with which she uttered the last words was scarcely justified by circumstances; since Mr. Desmond spent always one, and often two days a week at Hampton Villa.

So all the invitations were refused, and Laurence ate his Christmas dinner at River Lawn, where he met a secondrate literary celebrity and his wife, and an elderly magnate of the War-office, who had been a bosom friend of Mrs. Jerningham's father. They were people whom he met very frequently at Hampton. He knew the literary gentleman's good stories by heart, and loathed them; he knew the bad stories of the War-office magnate, and loathed them with a still deeper aversion; indeed, there were different series of Castlereaghiana and Wellingtoniana, which inspired him with a wild desire to throw claret-jugs and other instruments of warfare at the head of the narrator. Mrs. Jerningham's circle grew narrower every day. The green-eyed monster held her in his fatal grip, and one by one she struck the best names from her visiting-list. She did not care to invite very pretty women or very charming women; for every word or look of Laurence Desmond's was a sufficient cause for doubt and terror in her diseased imagination. She was jealous even of very agreeable men, if they absorbed too much of the editor's attention. She condemned him to dulness, and yet upbraided him because he was not gay.

"I fear you have not enjoyed your evening, Laurence," she said, as he lingered for a few minutes' confidential talk before hurrying off to catch the last train for London.

"I have enjoyed my little snatches of talk with you," he answered mildly; "but I am getting rather tired of Stapleton, and your old friend's Wellington stories are almost too much for human endurance."

"How do you like Mrs. Stapleton?"

"I have told you at least a dozen times. She is ladylike ; but neither particularly pretty nor particularly amusing. She gave me some very interesting details about her elder boy's experiences in the way of hooping-cough, and the trouble she has with her cook. How is it I never see your friends the Westcombes ? He is a very nice fellow, and Mrs. Westcombe a most delightful little woman."

"You think her pretty ?"

"Amazingly pretty, in the soubrette style. You used to admire her so much."

"I think it was you who admired her so much," answered Mrs. Jerningham, with suppressed acrimony.

"I only echoed your sentiments. Have you quarrelled with her ?"

"I am not in the habit of quarrelling with my acquaintance."

"No ; but you have a knack of dropping them. Your house used to be the pleasantest in England."

"And it has ceased to be so because Mrs. Westcombe has ceased to visit me. If I cannot make my house pleasant to you myself, I will not ask you to come to it."

"Your house is always pleasant to me when I find you and Mrs. Colton alone ; but even you cannot make dull people agreeable. If you invite people for my pleasure, you should choose those I like."

"Very well, Monsieur le Soudain, in future I will send you my visiting-list."

"You are always unjust, Emily. You cross-question me, and then object to my candour."

Although Mr. Desmond was accustomed to relate almost all the details of his existence for the amusement of Mrs. Jerningham, he had refrained from telling her his experiences at the Oxford-road Theatre, or his renewal of an old friendship with Tristram Alford. Experience was fast teaching him a reticence that was the next thing to hypocrisy. It would have been very pleasant to him to tell the lady of River Lawn the story of Lucy Alford's trials and aspirations ; but he had an ever-present terror of awakening that slumbering monster, always lurking in the depths of Emily Jerningham's mind. He knew that to speak of Lucy would bring upon him a sharp interrogation ; and he shrunk from the idea of a possible scene which might arise out of the mention of that damsel's name.

He expected Mr. Alford to breakfast on the morning after that uncongenial evening at Hampton, and had taken care that a tempting meal should be prepared for the dweller on the heights of Ball's Pond. He waited breakfast for more than an hour, and only gave his visitor up when his own engagements obliged him to drink his tea and eat his dry toast with business-like haste, while the kippered salmon and devilled kidneys remained neglected in their hot-water dishes on a stand by the fire.

"I suppose poor old Tristram has forgotten our engagement," he said to himself, as he began his morning's work; "I should like to have seen him, in order to have some talk with him about that poor little girl's prospects; and yet what good can I hope to achieve for her, if the father is a drunkard? Nothing else could have brought him so low: for he had an excellent position when I knew him twelve years ago. Even then Waldon and I suspected his attachment to the brandy-bottle. He was so fond of recommending brandy and cold water as the remedy for every disease common to mortality. And now it has come from brandy to gin—which indicates a decadence of a hundred per cent in his social status. Poor girl! she is such a pretty, winning, childlike creature, and of that sympathetic nature which is so susceptible to all suffering."

Neither letter nor message of apology or explanation came from Mr. Alford during that day, but very late at night came a mysterious boy with a damp and dirty-looking missive from the learned Tristram. Mr. Alford was one of those people whose letters usually arrive late at night; so Laurence was in nowise disconcerted when his man informed him that a boy had brought this damp epistle, and was waiting for an answer.

"Has the letter come from Islington by hand?" asked Laurence, surprised that the needy tutor should have preferred to employ the expensive luxury of a messenger to the cheap convenience of a postage-stamp.

The majordomo departed to question the boy, and returned to tell his master that the letter had not come from Islington, but from Whitecross-street.

That fatal name explained all. Mr. Desmond tore open the flabby envelope, and read the following epistle, in the penmanship whereof was ample evidence of the flurry and distraction of mind incident upon a first night in bondage.

"MY DEAR DESMOND,—The sword of Damocles has been long suspended above my unhappy head. This morning the hair snapped, and a writ issued by a butcher at Henley, who enjoyed my custom for many years, but whose later accounts I have been unable to discharge, has brought me to this place. The necessity for the step which I am about to take has long been obvious; but I have hoped against hope, and struggled on bravely, with the idea of making some kind of compromise with my old Henley creditors. I now feel that this desire is vain:

'Longa via est, nec tempora longa supersunt.'

"I am too old to accomplish the Sisyphean labour of paying debts which seem to spring from the very earth like the armed antagonists of Cadmus. I have resolved therefore to endure that shame which worthier men than I have suffered. I must avail myself of the protection which the law affords to honest poverty, and with this view I

have sent for a solicitor versed in this kind of practice, and have made arrangements for placing my petition on the file.

"I am told by one of my fellow-prisoners that the small amount of my debts will in all likelihood be a hindrance to my release. If my liabilities were of a colossal character, their extinction would be a mere affair of accountancy, and I might enjoy the mildness of a winter in the south of France while my lawyers arranged an agreeable settlement in Walbrook, and might return in the spring to make my bow before the commissioners, and to be complimented on the excellence of my bookkeeping. But for the man who owes a few paltry hundreds are reserved the extreme rigours of the law; and I am advised to prepare myself for much harassing delay before I obtain my protection and can once more walk at liberty among my fellow-men.

"This, for myself, I could bear with stoical fortitude; but what is my child to do while I am detained in this wretched place? The old Queen's Bench gave a hospitable shelter to the prisoner, and afforded a comfortable home for his family; but here stern warders refuse me the privilege of my daughter's company, nor could I bring her even for an hour into a common ward where she would be in all probability the subject of rude remark or insolent observation. The poor child is yet in ignorance of my incarceration. I left her upon a pretence of business in the City, intending to inform her by letter of my whereabouts; but now the night has come, I have not courage to write that letter; and in my dilemma I venture to appeal to you, the only friend on whose goodness I can count.

"Will you, my dear Desmond, call at Paul's-terrace early to-morrow morning, and tell my poor Lucy the reason of my non-appearance? If you will at the same time generously advance her a small sum for the payment of the account owing to Mrs. Wilkins the landlady, and for the expenses of Lucy's journey to Market Deeping—which she must now take alone—you will confer a boon upon one who to his last hour will cherish the memory of your goodness. The cessation of even Mr. de Mortemar's pitiful stipend has been felt by us.

"Pardon this long epistle from your distracted friend,

"T. A.

"White X Street Prison, nine o'clock."

"Alone, and her father in prison, poor, ill-used girl," said Laurence, as he finished this letter. He had been thinking of her with regret and compassion more than once that day, but he had little known the utter misery of her position. She was quite alone, this girl, who was of an age to need all the protecting influences of home—alone in a shabby lodging, with vulgar, sordid people, it might be, who would use her harshly because of those unpaid bills alluded to so lightly by the captive of Whitecross-street.

"What a father!" mused Mr. Desmond. "He leaves his daughter

in ignorance of his fate, to suffer the tortures of suspense all day, and at night writes to ask me, a single man of something less than five-and-thirty years of age, to befriend and protect the poor helpless girl. I am the only friend he has; and he can trust me, he says. How does he know that he can trust me? and what guarantee has he for my honour? Only the fact that I read with him twelve years ago, and have lent him money since that time. And on the strength of this he asks me to befriend his daughter in her loneliness. If I were a scoundrel, he would have done the same. Indeed, how does he know that I am not a scoundrel? And this poor little girl must go through life with no better guardian; and the world is full of scoundrels."

Mr. Desmond looked at the dial on the low Belgian marble mantelpiece, where a lank and grim Mephistopheles, with peaked beard and pointed shoes, kept watch and ward over an ivy-mantled clock-tower. It was nearly eleven o'clock.

"I daresay she is sitting up, waiting for him, at this moment," Laurence said to himself. "Why should she be kept in suspense till to-morrow morning? It will be no more trouble to me to go up there to-night than to-morrow; and I can much better spare the time now. It would be actual cruelty to let that poor girl suffer twelve hours more of uncertainty and apprehension; for I daresay she loves this reprobate father of hers as fondly as it is the luck of such reprobates to be loved. He is the kind of father who ruins himself and his children with the most affectionate intentions, and would perish rather than speak an unkind word to the child whose prospects he is destroying."

Upon this Mr. Desmond threw down his book, and went in quest of his hat and overcoat.

The streets were clear at this time, and a hansom carried Laurence Desmond to Paul's-terrace in half an hour. He saw the feeble light burning in the parlour-window as he stepped from the cab, and before he could knock, the door was opened, and a tremulous voice cried "Papa, papa; O, thank God you have come."

It was Lucy. She recognised Laurence in the next moment, and recoiled from him with a faint shriek of horror.

"Something has happened to papa!" she cried, and then began to tremble violently.

"My dear Lucy—my dear girl, your father is well—quite well," Laurence exclaimed, eager to relieve the poor terrified child, whose teeth chattered in an agony of fear. He took her by the arm with gentle firmness, and led her into the parlour.

"It has been very wrong of your father to leave you ignorant of his whereabouts," he said; "but I am sure you will forgive him when you know the cause. He is quite well; but he is a prisoner in Whitecross-street, and is likely to remain there for a week or two. He had not

courage to write you the tidings of his troubles, and so sent me to tell you his misfortune."

"Poor dear papa! Thank heaven that he is well. You—you are not deceiving me, Mr. Desmond," she said suddenly, with the look of terror coming back to her pale sad face; "my father is really well. The only trouble is the prison?"

"That is the only trouble."

"Then I can bear it very patiently," answered Lucy, with a plaintive resignation that seemed inexpressibly touching to Laurence. "We have long known that trouble of that kind was inevitable. Poor dear papa; it is a very uncomfortable place, is it not? He was in a prison on the other side of the Thames once, when I was a little girl, and poor mamma and I used to go and see him; and it seemed quite a pleasant place, like a large hotel. But even the prisons are wretched now, papa says. I may go and see him, may I not?"

"Yes; I believe you can be allowed to see him. But it is not a nice place for you to visit."

"I do not mind that in the least, if I may only see him. Can I go very early to-morrow; papa will want linen, and razors, and things. O, why did he not send a messenger for a portmanteau? It would have been so much more comfortable for him to have his things ready for the morning."

"And he would have spared you many hours of anxiety," said Mr. Desmond, touched by the unselfishness of the girl, who in this hour of trouble had not one thought for herself. He could not avoid making a comparison, as he reflected how Emily Jerminham, under the same circumstances, would have bewailed her own misery, and the horror and degradation of her position.

"She could suffer slow death at the stake with a smile upon her splendid face for pride's sake," that impertinent inward voice, which he was always trying to stifle, remarked obtrusively; "but she has no idea of enduring patiently as this girl endures, unconscious of her own suffering in her thoughtfulness for others. With Emily the virtues are different phases of egotism."

"Yes, I have been very wretched since two o'clock, when I expected papa to dinner," said Lucy; "but I feel almost happy now that I know he is well. Do you think the prison is a *very* uncomfortable place?"

"Well, I daresay it is rather a rough kind of lodging; but no doubt your father will contrive to make himself tolerably comfortable. It will not be long, you know. He is almost sure to get his protection in a week or two."

"Whose protection did you say?" Lucy faltered, at a loss to understand this phrase.

"His own protection—an immunity from arrest—his liberty, in point of fact. It is only a technical term. But what will you do in the mean time? That is the question."

"I fear I shall have to leave town before poor papa gets his release. The Market-Deeping theatre opens on New-Year's night ; and I think I must go on the 28th at latest. They are going to do the burlesque of *Lucretia Borgia*, and I am to play Gennaro."

"Gennaro?"

"Yes. The son, you know. I believe he gets poisoned, or something, at the end. I have to sing a parody on 'Sam Hall' and the 'Cat's-meat-man;' and I have to dance a—a—cellar-flap breakdown, I believe they call it. It is a very good part."

"Indeed! The 'cellar-flap breakdown,' and 'Sam Hall,' and the 'Cat's-meat-man,' constitute a very good part. I am sorry for the legitimate drama."

"O, of course it is not like Pauline or Julia," cried Lucy; "but as a burlesque part it is very good. And in the country one has to play burlesque and farce and everything."

"And for that I suppose your salary is only four or five pounds a week?"

"My salary at Market Deeping will be twenty-five shillings," Lucy answered, blushing.

Four or five pounds—it was a salary which she had thought of sometimes in her dreams. She knew that there were people in London who actually had such salaries ; but to her the sum seemed fabulous as the golden treasure of Raleigh's unknown lands may have seemed to his mutinous crew.

Mr. Desmond made no remark upon the smallness of this pitiful stipend, though the thought of it smote his heart with actual pain.

"Your father sent you some money," he said, not without embarrassment, "to carry on the housekeeping, and so on."

"Papa sent me money! You have seen him, then?" Lucy asked eagerly.

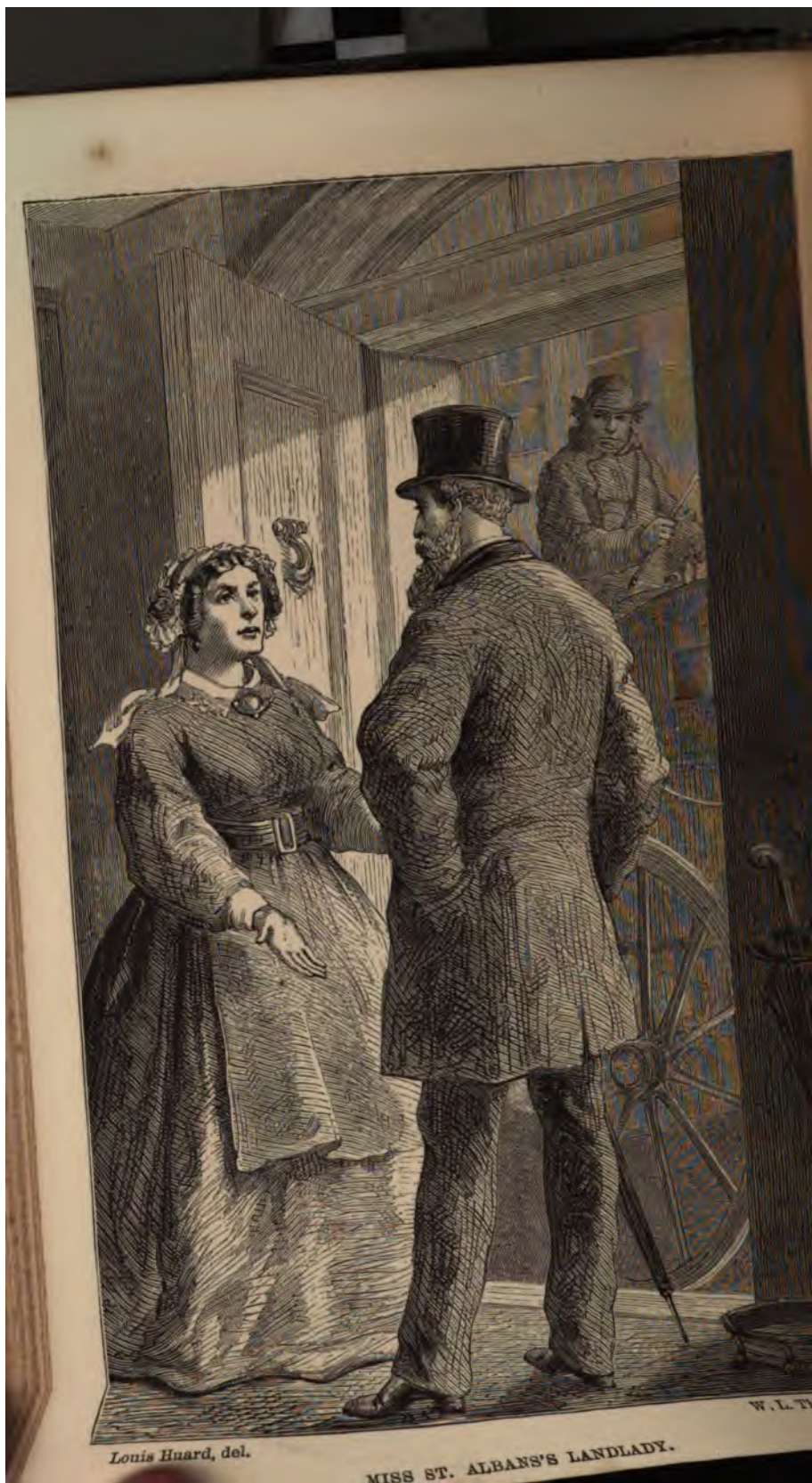
"No. A messenger brought me his letter—"

"And the money. Where could papa get money? I know he had none when he left home this morning; and he has no friend in the world but you. Ah, I understand, Mr. Desmond. It is your own money you are giving me; and you are so kind, so thoughtful, that you fear I should be pained by knowing how much we owe you. I am used to feel the weight of such obligations, Mr. Desmond, and I have sometimes felt the burden very heavy; but with you it is different. Your kindness takes the sting out of the obligation; and—and it does not seem so deep a humiliation to accept your charity—"

Here the sweet low voice trembled and broke down, and the tutor's daughter burst into tears.

"Lucy, my dear girl—my dearest Lucy—for God's sake, don't do that," cried Laurence, overcome in a moment by the aspect of that half-averted face, which the girl vainly strove to cover with her hands. The *waterdrops* trickled through those slender fingers. All day her hear-





Louis Huard, del.

MISS ST. ALBANS'S LANDLADY.

W.L.T.

had been well nigh bursting with grief, and unhappily her fortitude must needs give way at this very inconvenient crisis.

Truly a pleasant situation for the editor of the *Pallas*. Called upon at a moment's notice to play the part of comforter and benefactor to a pretty, sensitive girl of eighteen whose father was in prison!

"If Emily Jerningham could see me now," Mr. Desmond said to himself involuntarily.

He had called Miss Alford his dear—nay, indeed, his dearest—Lucy; but it was in the same spirit of compassion that would have prompted him to address endearing epithets to the charwoman who cleaned his rooms, had he found that honest creature in bitter need of consolation. His conscience whispered no word of reproof to him on that score; but he felt somehow that his position was a perilous one, though he wondered what the peril could be.

"Am I a fool or a reprobate, that I cannot befriend an innocent little girl without some kind of danger to her or myself?" the inward voice demanded angrily.

Miss Alford had recovered her composure by this time.

"I have been so unhappy all day that your kindness quite overcame me," she said quietly. "I hope you will forgive me for being so silly."

"Do not talk of my kindness," answered the editor, who seemed now the more embarrassed of the two. "It is a great pleasure to me to serve—your father. You must go to Lincolnshire on the 28th, the day after to-morrow. Shall you be obliged to travel alone?"

"Yes; but I am not at all afraid of travelling alone."

"Una was not afraid of the lion," Mr. Desmond murmured to himself softly; and then he added aloud, "If you really wish to see your father to-morrow, I will take you to him."

"You are too kind; but I cannot consent to give you so much trouble. I don't at all mind going to the prison alone."

"No, no, you shall not do that. There might be all kinds of difficulty about getting admitted, and so on. I shall call for you at twelve o'clock to-morrow. You must let me play the part of your elder brother upon this occasion, or your father. I am almost old enough to stand in the latter position, you know."

At this Lucy blushed crimson; and the sight of that shy blushing face sent a strange thrill to the heart of the editor. He bade her a hasty good-night and went back to his cab. The interview had only lasted ten minutes—though the cabman mulcted him of sixpence by and by on account of the delay—and the grim-visaged landlady, who stood lurking at the head of the kitchen-stairs, had no ground for complaint that the proprieties had been outraged.

He stopped to say a word or two to this grim-visaged individual.

"Mr. Alford is unavoidably detained out of town for a few days," he said. "I hope you will take care of his daughter during his absence."

"I hope *my little account* will be paid before Miss St. Halbings

goes to Lincolnshire," answered the woman sternly. "I've had a many theatricals from the Wells in my parlours; though theatricals in general are parties I avoid taking; but I never had any theatrical backward in his rent till Mr. St. Halbings came to me."

"Miss St. Albans can pay you to-night, if you please," replied the editor; "her father has sent her money for that purpose."

"Ho, indeed," cried the landlady, with a tone of satisfaction that was not without a shade of irony; "circumstances alter cases. I am glad to find that Miss St. Halbings has got so rich all of a sudden."

"She is rich enough to find new lodgings, if you make these disagreeable to her," answered Laurence angrily. There was an insolence about the woman's tone which made his blood boil.

Yet what could he do? It would have been very pleasant to him to horsewhip this grim-visaged landlady; but one of the perplexities of social existence lies in the fact that the opposite sexes cannot horsewhip each other. Mr. Desmond ground his teeth, and departed with a sentiment of anger against a universe in which such a girl as Lucy Alford was subject to the insolence of grim-visaged landladies.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A PERILOUS PROTEGEE.

EVEN the icy December blast, which buffeted Mr. Desmond as his hansom descended the Islingtonian Mont Blanc, could not blow away his sense of impotent indignation against the Nemesis who had presided over the youth of Miss Alford. His slumbers were rendered restless by the thought of her wrongs; and the picture of a desolate girl, travelling alone through a bleak wintry landscape, was the first image that presented itself to his mind when he awoke.

He disposed of his breakfast in about ten minutes, and from nine to half-past eleven worked at his desk as even he rarely worked. For scarcely any one but a helpless girl whose sorrows had enlisted all his sympathy, would the editor of the *Pallas* have sacrificed the noon of a business day. He glanced with a guilty look at a pile of proofs that lay unread amongst his chaos of papers, and then departed to keep his appointment with Lucy.

He took her to the prison, and was present during the interview between father and daughter. Lucy's tenderness and sweetness touched him to the heart. Never before had he seen such patience, such unselfish affection; never had he imagined so perfect a type of womanhood.

"And she will go to that country theatre, utterly friendless and alone, to sing the 'Cat's-meat-man,' and to dance a cellar-flap break-down," Mr. Desmond said to himself as he stood in the background watching this Grecian daughter of Ball's Pond, who would have given her heart's best blood for the captive father, about whose neck she hung so fondly.

"I would rather see her under the wheels of Juggernaut than dancing a cellar-flap breakdown," thought Mr. Desmond. And at this moment there arose in Laurence Desmond's mind a desperate resolution. He would do something—he knew not what, but something—to prevent any further dancing of cellar-flap break-downs on the part of Miss Alford. During that brief interview of the preceding night his quick eye had noted a mysterious rose-coloured satin garment of the tunic family lying on a table beside a shabby little workbox and a paper of spangles, whereby he opined that Miss Alford had been sewing spangles upon this rose-coloured garment, and that it was to be worn by her in the character of Gennaro, together with a pair of little rose-coloured silk boots very much the worse for wear, but laboriously darned and renovated by spangles.

"She might surely be a nursery-governess—a companion to some kind elderly lady; anything would be better than the Cat's-meat-man," he said to himself; and, being prone to act with promptitude and decision in all the affairs of life, he broke ground with Miss Alford immediately after leaving the prison. They had travelled from Islington in a cab; but as it was a fine clear day, and as Lucy seemed to consider walking no hardship, he offered her his arm, and began the homeward journey on foot. He wanted to talk seriously to her, undistracted by the rattle of a cab.

"Are you very fond of acting?" he began.

"O yes, Mr. Desmond, I love it dearly, when I play my own parts—Pauline and Julia—Juliet and Ophelia, you know."

"Yes; but there is so much hardship, so many discouragements."

"I do not mind either hardship or discouragement," the girl answered bravely.

"Not now perhaps, while you are very young and very hopeful; but the day must come when—"

"O don't, please don't!" cried Lucy piteously. "You are talking like Mrs. M'Grudder. 'Wait till you've been in the profession as long as I have, my dear,' she says, 'and then you'll know what it is to be an actress. Look at me, and see where I am, after five-and-twenty years' slavery; and I had talent, when I began;' and she lays such an insulting emphasis on the 'I,' and makes me feel utterly wretched for the rest of the evening, unless I get a little more applause than usual to give me courage. There is a chimneysweep, a regular playgoer, at Market Deeping, who is said to be quite the king of the gallery—all the other gallery people form their opinion by his, you know; and I believe he likes me. He always gives me a reception."

"A reception?"

"Yes; he applauds me when I first come on;—that is a reception, you know; and a good reception puts one in spirits for the whole evening. The sweep cries 'Bravo,' or 'Brayvo' as he calls it, poor fellow; and then they all applaud."

Her face quite softened as she thought of the chimneysweep, and Laurence Desmond watched her with a smile, half pitying, half amused,—she seemed such a childish creature, in her ignorant hopefulness, and dependence on the approbation of chimneysweeps.

"I should be very sorry to seem as disagreeable to you as Mrs. M'Grudder does," he said presently; "but I am very deeply interested in your career—for auld lang syne, you know—and I want to discuss your prospects seriously. I do not think the stage, as it is at present constituted, offers a brilliant prospect for any woman. Of course there are exceptional circumstances, and there is exceptional talent; but, unhappily, even exceptional talent does not always win its reward unless favoured by exceptional circumstances. Your surroundings are against you, my dear Miss Alford. Your father's ignorance of the dramatic world, your own inexperience of any world except the world of books, must tell against you when you fight for precedence with people who have been born and bred at the side-scenes of a theatre. The prizes in the dramatic profession are very few, and the blanks are the most worthless of all ciphers. And for the chance of winning one of these rare prizes you must stake so much. Even in these enlightened days there are prejudiced people who hold in abhorrence the profession of Garrick and the Kembles, of Mrs. Pritchard and Mrs. Kean; and by and by, when you have failed, perhaps, to realise one of the bright hopes that sustain you now, and have entered upon some other career, malicious people will reproach you with your dramatic associations, and discredit the truth and purity of your nature, because you tried to support your father by the patient exercise of your talents and your industry. You see I know what the world is, Lucy, and know that it can be a very hard and bitter world; above all things, bitter for a woman whose youth is unguarded by any natural protector."

Miss Alford looked at him wonderingly. "I have papa," she said. "What other protector can I want?"

"Your papa loves you very fondly, I have no doubt; but his circumstances do not enable him to—"

"You mean that he is poor?" Lucy interposed, a little wounded.

"No, it is not of his poverty I am thinking, but of his inexperience. In all matters relating to the profession you have chosen, your father is as inexperienced as yourself. He cannot help you, as other girls who aspire for dramatic success are helped by those about them."

"Yes, that is quite true," answered the girl, rather sadly; "but I hope to succeed in spite of that. And by and by, when I get a London engagement, and have a salary of three or four pounds a week, papa and I can live in nice lodgings, and be very happy."

"And you really like your theatrical life, with all its difficulties; even with its Mrs. M'Grudders?"

"I like it so much, that neither Mrs. M'Grudder nor you can discourage me," answered Lucy. "I know that you speak very kindly,

and that you are the best and most generous of friends; but I cannot tell you how it pains me to hear you run down the Profession."

This was a difficulty which Mr. Desmond had never contemplated. In a moment of generous feeling, he had resolved to rescue this fair young flower from the foul atmosphere in which her freshness was fading, and, behold, the fair young flower rejoiced in that unwholesome atmosphere, and refused to be restored to loftier and purer regions. He would have snatched this brand from the burning, but the brand preferred to remain in Tophet. For the first time in his life Mr. Desmond understood the nature of that midsummer madness which affects the ignorant aspirant for dramatic fame; for the first time he beheld what it was to be "stage-struck." If he had been talking to a young actress familiar from her cradle with the mysteries of her art, she would have heartily coincided with his abuse of "the profession;" but Lucy Alford was but fresh from the little parlour at Henley, where she had rehearsed Shakespeare, and Sheridan Knowles, and Bulwer Lytton, before the looking-glass, in a fever of poetic feeling, and she had all the amateur's fond, ignorant love of her art.

She knew that Mr. Desmond meant kindly by her, but she was cruelly afflicted by the tenor of his advice. "*Et tu, Brute,*" she said to herself sadly. So many people had tortured and tormented her by their dismal croakings about the career she had chosen; and now he, even he, the friend who had promised to help her, went over to the enemy, and spoke to her in the accents of M'Grudder. She had been very happy that morning as they drove to Whitecross-street; yes, actually happy, when the father she loved was languishing in captivity; but her heart sank with a new despondency as she walked by Mr. Desmond's side after this serious conversation.

Was it all true that people told her? she asked herself; was there no such thing as success possible for her, let her study never so diligently, and labour never so industriously? And then she thought of Mrs. Siddons, who appeared in London, young, beautiful, gifted, only to fail ignominiously, and then went quietly back to her provincial drudgery, and plodded on with inimitable patience, to return in due time and take the town by storm. It was from the consideration of this little history she was wont to obtain consolation when depressed by the advice of her acquaintance; but even this failed to console her to-day. Discouragement from Laurence Desmond seemed more depressing than from anyone else. Was he not her kindest—nay, indeed, her only—friend, and could she doubt the sincerity of his counsel?

The tears gathered slowly in her downcast eyes as she walked silently by his side thinking thus; but she contrived to brush those unbidden tears away, almost unseen by her companion. Almost, but not quite unseen. Laurence saw that she was depressed, and he had a faint suspicion that she had been crying; and immediately his heart

smote him, and he was angry with himself for the recklessness with which his rude hand had smitten down her airy castle.

"Poor little girl!" he said to himself very sadly; "and she really thinks that she will be a great actress some day, and win her reward for all the patient drudgery of the present. Well, she must keep her day-dream, since it is so dear. Mine shall not be the hand to let in the common light of reason on her dream-world. But I am very sorry for her, notwithstanding."

And hereupon Mr. Desmond tried to cheer his companion with much pleasant and hopeful talk; and the innocent young face brightened, and the shy, blue eyes glanced up at him with a grateful look which went straight to his heart, whither, indeed, all this girl's unsophisticated words and looks seemed to go.

"She is born to melt the hearts of men," he said to himself; "a tender, Wordsworthian creature, plaintive and grateful and confiding. She will make a very sweet Juliet, if she ever acquires dramatic tact and power; but I cannot endure the preliminary ordeal of the Cat's-meat-man. Free-trade in the drama is no doubt a supreme good, but there are times when one sighs for the days of the patent theatres, when every provincial manager kept a Shakespearian school, and would have shrunk appalled from the idea of street-boy dances and street-boy songs."

Mr. Desmond and the young actress walked all the way from Whitecross-street to Paul's-terrace, and it seemed to Laurence quite a natural occurrence to be walking thus with the girl's shabby little glove upon his arm. He was quite conscious that she was poorly dressed, that her shawl would have been despised by the tawdry factory-girls they met near the Gray's-inn-road; but he knew that she looked like a lady, in spite of her well-worn shawl, and he had no sense of shame in the companionship. He had never felt a more unselfish regard than he felt for this girl, and during the visit to the prison he had decided upon taking a step the desperation whereof he was by no means inclined to underrate. He had determined to obtain Emily Jerningham's friendship for Lucy Alford, if sympathy with any human creature could be awakened in that lady's heart and mind.

"I have never yet asked her a favour," he said to himself. "I will ask her to interest herself in this poor girl's fate. My friendship can serve Lucy Alford very little; but the friendship of a woman, an accomplished woman like Emily, who is in every way independent, may help to shape her future, and rescue her at once from 'cellar-flap breakdowns' and 'cat's-meat-men.' Emily is always bewailing the emptiness of her life. It might be at once an amusement and a consolation to her to befriend this girl. I know it is a generous heart to which I shall make my appeal. The only question is, whether I can contrive to touch that heart with Lucy Alford's story."

Mr. Desmond only apprehended one difficulty in the matter, but

that was a rather serious one. Might not Mrs. Jerningham—of late the victim of such morbid fancies, such frivolous suspicions—take it into her head to be jealous of this girl? and in that case there was an end to all hope for Lucy. Let the green-eyed monster show but the tip of his forked tail, and friendship between Mrs. Jerningham and Miss Alford would be an impossibility.

Reasoning upon the matter within himself as he walked by Lucy's side, Laurence Desmond decided that jealousy in this case must needs be out of the question.

"No, no; she has been foolish and absurd enough in her fancies, Heaven knows; but here it is impossible. The girl is twelve or fifteen years younger than I am, and has nothing in common with me or the world I live in."

After arguing with himself thus, Mr. Desmond decided that there was no possibility of any such feeling as jealousy upon Emily Jerningham's part; and yet it seemed to him that it would be a desperate and awful thing to address the lady of River Lawn on the subject of Lucy Alford.

They arrived at Paul's-terrace while the editor was still meditating upon the young lady's future, and, indeed, before he had altogether decided upon what was best to be done on her behalf. An unexpected difficulty had arisen in the girl's enthusiastic regard for her profession. It was quite out of the question that Mr. Desmond should introduce Lucy to Mrs. Jerningham while the girl still hankered after the triumphs of Market Deeping. All thought of cellar-flap breakdowns and cat's-meat-men must be put away before Lucy could approach the wife of Harold Jerningham.

In this perplexity of mind Mr. Desmond could not bring himself to bid Lucy Alford good-bye upon the threshold of No. 20 Paul's-terrace, as she evidently expected him to do. He lingered doubtfully for a minute or two, and then went into the parlour with her.

"I should like to have a few minutes' chat before I bid you good-bye," he said. "I suppose you really must go to-morrow?"

"Yes, to-morrow is the latest. It seems very dreadful to leave papa in that horrible dingy place; but he says it will be only for a few days. I ought to have been at Market Deeping on Monday for the rehearsals. Mr. Bungrave is very particular."

"What time do you start?"

"At a quarter past five."

"In the afternoon, I suppose?"

"O no, in the morning."

"At a quarter past five on a December morning!" cried Laurence with a shudder. "Isn't that a very inconvenient hour?"

"Yes, it is rather disagreeable to start before it is light, because cabmen are always so ill-tempered at that time in the morning. But

the train goes at a quarter past five, and I must contrive to be at the station at five."

"*The* train?" repeated Laurence. "There must be several trains for Lincolnshire in the course of the day."

"O yes, there are other trains; but, you see, that is the parliamentary train, and in the Profession people generally travel by the parliamentary train, because it is so much cheaper, you know, and it comes to the same thing in the end. One meets most respectable people, generally with large families of children and canary-birds; and sometimes people even play cards, if one can get something flat—a tea-tray or a picture—to play on. One has to hide the cards, of course, when the guard comes round, unless he happens to be a very good-natured guard, who pretends not to see them. O, I assure you, it is not at all disagreeable to travel by the parliamentary train."

"Well, I can fancy there *might* be a combination of circumstances under which a journey to—say the Land's End—in the slowest of parliamentaries would be delightful," said the editor, looking at the girl's innocent, animated face with a very tender smile. "But I think I could willingly forego the children and the canaries, and even the card-playing on a tea-tray. Suppose you go by the mid-day express, Lucy, upon this occasion, as the weather is cold, and you will be travelling alone? I will meet you at the station, and see to your ticket, and all that kind of thing; and then, when I have placed you in the care of the most indulgent guard who ever ignored card-playing on a tea-tray, I can go to Whitecross-street and assure your father of your comfortable departure."

"You are too kind. I cannot accept so much kindness," murmured Lucy, to whom it was a very new thing to receive such evidence of disinterested friendship.

As she faltered her grateful acknowledgments, with a confusion of manner that was not without its charm, her eyes wandered to the chimney-piece, where there was a letter, directed in a sprawling masculine hand.

"It is from the manager," she said, as she took the letter. "Perhaps to scold me for not being at the theatre last Monday. Will you excuse me if I read it, Mr. Desmond?"

"I would excuse you if you read all the epistles of Pliny," said Laurence; and in the next moment could have cut his tongue out.

Lucy tore open her letter with nervous haste. The change in her countenance as she read told Mr. Desmond that the missive brought her no good tidings.

"Is there anything amiss?" he asked.

"O, it is cruel, it is shameful!" cried the girl indignantly. "Mr. Bungrave has given Gennaro to another lady because I was not there for the rehearsal yesterday. Papa wrote to him to say when we were *ing*; and if he had telegraphed to say I must positively be there,

I should have gone. And now I have lost my engagement, after studying my part so carefully, and altering my dress, and—”

Here the young lady stopped abruptly, and Laurence saw that it cost her no small effort to keep back her tears. She was very young, and the fever of the amateur, the devotee of a beloved art, was strong upon her. Laurence perceived also her regretful glance in the direction of a little old-fashioned sofa, on which there lay neatly folded the rose-coloured satin garment he had seen the night before; and he felt that to be disappointed of the glory of appearing in this costume was a grief to her.

“I must confess that I am not sorry for this, Lucy,” he said earnestly. “I do not think there could have been any lasting triumph won by the Cat’s-meat-man.”

Miss St. Albans could not be brought all at once to see that the Cat’s-meat-man was an abomination.

“Gennaro is a beau-beau-tiful part,” she said, struggling with her emotion; “it is full of good puns, and the parodies are splendid, and—. If I had a regular written engagement, Mr. Bungrave couldn’t treat me so; but there was only a verbal understanding between him and papa. I daresay it is all Mr. de Mortemar’s doing, because of my leaving the Oxford-road Theatre. Mr. de Mortemar can do anything at Market Deeping, he is such an immense favourite.”

“Indeed!” said Laurence, on whose editorial ear the “immense favourite” grated unpleasantly; “and it is my fault that you offended Mr. Mortemar—my fault, my very great fault. But do you know, Lucy, that I cannot bring myself to be sufficiently sorry for what I have done. You see, I feel a very real interest in your career; and I do not think your Market-Deeping experience could be of any actual benefit to you. I admit that you must arrive at Drury-lane and Juliet by easy stages; but I cannot see why you should begin by dancing silly dances, and singing still more silly songs. In March, Mr. Hartstone will give you an engagement at the Pall-Mall; and in the mean time your father will get through his difficulties, and you will have leisure for the study of your beloved art.”

“Yes,” answered Lucy, consoled but not elated, “I shall study with all my might. O, Mr. Desmond, what would become of us if your kindness had not secured me a London engagement!”

She was thinking sadly enough of the bitter shifts to which she and her father must needs be driven for want of the pittance that would have rewarded her labours at the little country theatre; and then, at Market Deeping lodgings and provisions were very cheap, and in London everything was so dear. The kindness and generosity of Mr. Desmond seemed boundless; but then, they could not go on living upon this gentleman’s charity.

Laurence saw her despondency, and had some idea of the cares that troubled her. *He could find no way of telling her that the dread*

spectre poverty was a shadow to be feared no longer, since he was ready to place his purse at her disposal until.—Until when? Well, she would have a salary from the lessee of the Pall-Mall in March; and then, of course, he need be Tristram Alford's banker no longer; and, in the mean time, what would his kindness cost him?—a ten-pound note now and then—a ten-pound note, which would be better bestowed thus than lost at a conservative whist-table, or squandered at a sale of books or bric-à-brac.

"You must try to make yourself happy while your father is under a cloud, Lucy," he said cheerily. "Rely upon it he will weather the storm, and right himself speedily. I will answer for that. In the interim, it will be rather dreary for you in these lodgings, I daresay; and I should much like to introduce you to a lady, a friend of mine."

"I—I am sure you are very kind," faltered Lucy; "and I shall be pleased to know any lady whom you like. Is she a relation of yours, Mr. Desmond?"

"No, not a relation, but a friend of many years' standing. Her father and my father were very intimate; in fact, I have known her a long time. I think she was as young as you, Lucy, when I first knew her."

His thoughts went back to the little garden at Passy, and the scarlet geraniums brightly red against the deep blue sky, and Emily Jerningham in all the glory of her girlhood. Well, those days were gone, and, unhappily, the Emily and Laurence of those days had vanished with them.

"She is not young now, then, the lady?" Lucy asked, with an interest that was a little warmer than the occasion warranted.

"Well, she is not what you would call young. I believe she is nearly thirty; and that to a young lady of eighteen seems a venerable age, no doubt. She is a very agreeable woman, generous-minded, and refined"—Laurence felt a little twinge of conscience as he remembered certain occasions upon which the lady in question had not shown herself so very generous-minded—"and I am sure her friendship would be a source of happiness for you."

"It is very good of you to think of this. It will be a pleasure to me to know any friend of yours; but—but—I am so unused to society; and while poor papa is in that dreadful place, I think I would rather not see any stranger, please, Mr. Desmond."

"Very well, we will see about it. If Mrs. Jerningham should call upon you some morning, you will not refuse to see her?"

"Mrs. Jerningham!" repeated Lucy; "she is a married lady, then?"

"Yes, she is married. Her husband is rather an eccentric person—a great traveller; so she lives by herself, in a very charming house near Hampton Court."

"Indeed!" said Lucy, with a little sigh that sounded rather like a

sigh of relief; and then she repeated her protestations of gratitude, which this time seemed less constrained.

After this, Mr. Desmond had nothing more to do than to say good-bye.

"I should recommend you not to go to Whitecross-street again," he said at parting. "It is an unpleasant place for you to visit alone; and your father will soon get his release. If my time were less engaged, I should be happy to take you there again; but I am too busy for friendship. Good-bye. I daresay you will see Mrs. Jerningham before long. You can be as frank with her as you are with me; but I am sure there is no occasion to tell you that, for it is your nature to be truthful and confiding. Once more, good-bye."

He pressed the little hand kindly, and departed. He felt that he had conducted himself in an eminently paternal manner; and it seemed to him that the sentiment of paternal regard had a strange sweetness—a sweetness that was not all sweet.

A GREAT BALL AND A GREAT BEAR

A Story of Two Birthdays

BY DABINGTON WHITE,
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BIRTHDAY THE FIRST

ON a certain Christmas-eve, some eight or nine years ago, there was a very noisy gathering on the third-floor of a house in Hyde-park-gardens. The party had assembled very early in the afternoon, and the great bare branches of the trees, tossed savagely by bleak December winds, and groaning as in mortal agony, were still visible in the winter dusk. Below, in the Bayswater-road, the lights were twinkling; and the bell of the muffin-man, plying his plebeian trade even in that patrician district, made merry music. Upstairs, in the spacious, cheery third-floor sitting-room, the Christmas firelight shone brightly upon the happy faces of a circle of young people, who were seated on the carpet for the performance of the mystic rites of that favourite Christmas game called "hunt the slipper."

The ages of the revellers ranged from five to fifteen. One of the eldest amongst them was the damsel in whose honour the festival was held—Miss Laura de Courcy, who had made her first appearance on the stage of life on a Christmas-eve fifteen years before, and who was entertaining her cousins of all degrees with certain mild dissipations appropriate to the occasion. They were to drink tea in these third-floor regions, which were sacred to Miss de Courcy, her younger brother, her reliable English governess, her accomplished Parisian governess, and the patient maid who brushed the damsel's silken curls some sixteen times in the day, after those hoydenish skirmishings with her younger brother in which the vivacious young person was wont to indulge.

Miss de Courcy was an only daughter, and an heiress to boot. A grandmamma of unspeakable descent and incalculable wealth had bequeathed all her possessions to this favoured damsel; and the damsel carried the sense of her wealth and her dignity as lightly as if it had been one of the normal attributes of girlhood.

It was her own pretty little black-satin slipper for which the disputants were now struggling. The door was opened suddenly while the noise was loudest, and a young man put his head into the room.

"Our bear-fights at Maudlin are nothing to this," he said.

Laura sprang to her feet as he spoke.

"How dare you come here, sir? This is my room, sir, and my party. You are to be downstairs, with papa and mamma. I won't have grown-up people intruding on my friends."

"Not if grown-up people bring you a pair of bullfinches?"

"Bullfinches! O, cousin George, that is quite a different thing! I have never had bullfinches. O, what a pretty cage!"

The cage was a Chinese pagoda, in delicate fretwork, with little bells that rang merrily as the intruder carried the cage to a table. There was a diversion among the slipper-hunters, and the children all clustered round the new-comer. This new-comer was Viscount Abberdale, a dark-eyed, handsome young fellow, with a kind pleasant face, and one amongst Miss de Courcy's numerous cousins.

"So you remembered that to-day is my birthday, George?" said Laura, when the bullfinches had been rapturously admired.

"My dear Laura, you know how kind your cousin always is," remonstrated Miss Vicker, the reliable English governess.

"Ah, *mon Dieu*! is it not that he is good?" exclaimed the irrepressible Parisienne in her native tongue.

"As if I could forget your birthday, Laura! Who was that unfortunate person who had Calais written on her heart? I have your name, and the date of your birthday, and ever so many memoranda respecting you, written on my heart, Laura. I don't think there can be room for any more writing."

"We all know that Lord Abberdale possesses a talent for talking nonsense," said the reliable one, as a hint that this kind of nonsense was inappropriate to the third-floor.

"But I have disturbed all the fun, Lorry," cried the Viscount. "Get away, Lio," he added unceremoniously to the heir of the De Courcys, who was dragging at his coat-tails; "it isn't your birthday; and if you're looking out for anything from Siraudin or Boissier, you won't find it in my dress-coat. I left a greatcoat in the hall, and I shouldn't be surprised if there were a few thousand boxes of goodies in the pockets of that." Off sped the heir, swift as a lapwing.

"And now we'll have 'hunt the slipper,'" cried George.

"Ah, that it is a droll of a young man!" shrieked the irrepressible.

"Laura, my love, I think the little ones will be anxious for their tea," said the Reliable; "suppose we adjourn to the next room.—Lord Abberdale, may we give you a cup of tea?"

"Thanks—yes. But why not more 'hunt the slipper'?"

"Miss de Courcy's little friends will be leaving her very early, and tea is ready. If you would *really* like a cup, you can go into the next room with us, Lord Abberdale."

"O, yes, if you please, Miss Vicker; I want to drink tea with my cousin on her birthday."

They went into the next room, another sitting-room, brightly but plainly furnished, like the first; and here was a table spread with all that is prettiest and most tempting in the way of tea.

"O, what pretty-looking cakes!" cried the undergraduate of Maudlin; "a dinner-table isn't half as pretty as a tea-table; and there's something so social and pleasant about tea. We always have coffee at

our 'wines,' you know, but they don't allow us such cakes as those when we are training."

Lord Abberdale insisted upon staying all tea-time, and further insisted upon making himself very busy with the dealing out of cups and saucers, and the nice admeasurement of cream and sugar.

Lionel de Courcy came shouting up the staircase, laden with bon-bon boxes; and the tea-table was thrown into confusion presently by the appearance of these treasures, and the excitement caused thereby.

All quiet Miss Vicker's excellent arrangements for her pupil's youthful guests were thrown out of gear by this wild Oxonian. The two white-aproned waiting-maids could scarcely make head against the confusion; and that Babel and riot arose which is common to all juvenile communities, unless kept down by the iron hand of despotism. Little ones clambered from their chairs, and bigger ones stretched eager arms across the table to clutch some satin bag of *pralines* or daintily-painted box of *violettes glacées*. Cups of tea were spilt over pretty fantastic dresses, devised by fond mothers and clever maids for this special occasion; pyramids of cake were overthrown, a glass preserve-dish was broken,—all was chaos; and across the "wrack" which she surveyed from her seat at the head of the table, Miss Vicker beheld, as in a vision, George Abberdale and Laura de Courcy seated calmly side by side, engaged in that kind of discourse which, had the damsel been "out," would have been called flirtation.

"How very wrong of Mrs. de Courcy to allow him to come upstairs!" she said to herself. And then she sank back in her chair, and abandoned herself, with a sigh of resignation, to the inevitable.

"What an awfully rigid individual your Miss Vicker is!" said the young man; "she will hardly allow me to look at you: as if we were not cousins, and as if we are not going to be something more than cousins one of these days."

"And pray what more than cousins shall we ever be, sir?" asked Laura, who was quite able to hold her own against this impertinent young nobleman.

"Never mind now; you will find out by and by. Do you know, I have secured a talisman which I shall keep as long as I live?"

"What kind of talisman?"

"The magic slipper,—*la pianella magica*! The slipper you were playing with just now. Was it made for Titania?"

"It was made for me, sir; and it is too large."

"You won't be troubled with it any more: I hope you have one on."

"Of course. That slipper was fetched from my room. Do you think I would hop about with one shoe on this cold winter's night? O dear, I hope there are no poor people without any shoes!"

"I'm afraid there are, my dear. But don't think of them now; it makes you look so sorrowful. I mean to keep this slipper."

"You are a most presuming person; and I shall tell Miss Vicker."

"O, no, you won't! Poor Miss Vicker! She is watching us now. How awful she looks, doesn't she? Quite a genteel Medusa."

"And pray what are you going to do with my slipper?"

"Keep it to be thrown after you on your wedding-day."

"You will throw it?" "O dear, no!" "And why not?"

"For the best possible reason: I shall be with you in the carriage."

Miss de Courcy blushed and laughed. For a beauty of three lustres she was tolerably advanced in the art of coquetry.

Tea was finished by this time. The younger guests were cloaked and shawled, and hooded and muffled, for departure. The elders were to go down to the drawing-room after dinner for a quadrille or two. There were visitors to the heads of the house expected; but not many. Town was empty; and only urgent parliamentary business had induced Mr. de Courcy to spend his Christmas in Hyde-park-gardens. Far away on the Scottish border there was a noble old castle where the family were wont to pass this pleasant season, with much festivity, and great advantage to the poor of the district. Of course arrangements had been made whereby the poor should be no losers because of the family's absence; but their absence was regretted in that Border district nevertheless; and blankets and flannel cloaks and comfortable winter gowns scarcely seemed of as good a quality when received from the hands of a grim old housekeeper, instead of the ladies of the mansion.

The party in the drawing-room assembled between nine and ten. Miss de Courcy and her three or four chosen friends came down at nine, and met her cousin ascending from the dining-room. She sat down to the piano and played to him, while her mamma dozed in the farther drawing-room; and then the grown-up company arrived, and there was a great deal of music and a little impromptu dancing. It was altogether a delightful evening, Laura thought.

"I shall keep my next birthday at Courcy," she said. "Shall you be with us, George?"

"I think not. I am going in for travelling when I leave Oxford."

"You will go to Switzerland and Italy? How delightful!"

"I shall do nothing so slow. I shall go to Africa, or the Caucasus. I mean to do the Caucasus completely."

"Is the Caucasus a nice place?"

"O, it's perfectly sweet! And the Amoor, and the Himalayas. When one considers the encroachments of Russia upon our Indian empire, you see, Lorry, it's a kind of duty every man owes his country to get himself coached-up in the Amoor and the Himalayas."

"Shall you be long away?" asked Laura, with a disappointed face.

"O, no; only half-a-dozen years or so. Of course I shall go in for the North Pole. A man who isn't well up in his Arctic regions gets snubbed by somebody every time he goes out to dinner. In fact, the Arctic regions are getting almost as common as the Matterhorn."

"Then if you're going to all these places, I'm sure you won't be at

home when I come of age. And papa has promised me all sorts of grand doings then. A fancy ball at Courcy. And I have so longed for a fancy ball: but I shall be dreadfully disappointed if you are not at my ball. I have always thought what fun it would all be, and what an absurd dress you would wear—a dress that no one would know you in, you know—a chimneysweep or a baker's man."

"I should like amazingly to come as a chimneysweep. You will be something magnificent, of course—a princess of the Middle Ages, in that dim period of shadowy kings and queens, and Princes of Wales trying on their fathers' crowns before the cheval-glass in the royal bed-chamber, when there were sumptuary laws to regulate the weight of the women's head-gear. I can fancy you in one of those high-peaked head-dresses, with a cloth-of-gold gown. You would look very jolly."

"Jolly!" repeated Miss de Courcy; "I shall not spend poor dear grandmamma's money on cloth-of-gold dresses in order to look jolly."

"You will look an angel; and I shall dance the first quadrille with you—chimneysweep and princess. The contrast will be sweet."

"Very sweet. You will be at the Caucasus, or on the North Pole, I daresay, when I come of age."

"From the heights of Caucasus, from the remotest depths of Polar regions, from the snow-drifts where the bleached bones of perished wanderers gleam ghastly white against the ghastly snow, from the Ganges, from the Chinese Wall, I shall come."

"Very well, sir. I shall remember your rash promise when my ball begins without a chimneysweep. However, the loss will be yours if you forget the occasion."

"I shall not forget."

"Mamma is beckoning to me," said Miss de Courcy, and thereupon slipped away to take shelter beneath the maternal wing. Miss Vicker, the reliable, had just drawn Mrs. de Courcy's attention to the fact that Lord Abberdale's attentions to his cousin were rather more pronounced than was consonant with the damsel's tender years.

"You are not paying any attention to your friends, Lorry," said mamma; "there is Bella Hargrave turning over a book of photographs in the dreariest manner. I shall not give you birthday-parties unless you behave better. You are always laughing with your cousin George."

"George is so funny. What do you think, mamma? He has actually pledged himself to appear at my birthday ball when I come of age. It is to be a fancy ball, you know—that's an old promise of papa's; and George declares he will dance the first quadrille with me dressed as a chimneysweep."

"D. V.," murmured the Reliable One piously.

After this, Laura de Courcy danced more than one dance with her cousin George. When eleven o'clock chimed from the clock on the chimney-piece, Miss Vicker came in search of her charge. The young friends had all departed within the last half-hour: only grown-up com-

pany remained. A young lady was singing an Italian canzonette in the second drawing-room. George and his cousin were almost alone in the large southward-looking room where they had danced. The birthday was over. Miss de Courcy was no longer queen of the occasion: she was there on sufferance, and was liable to be sent to bed at any moment. Miss Vicker and the moment came.

"I was just coming, Carry," cried Miss Laura. She called her mistress by her Christian name on occasions.—"Good-night, George."

"Good-night and good-bye, Lorry; I'm off to Norfolk for the shooting to-morrow, and then back to Oxford, and then—"

"What then?"

"Two fellows and I have planned a trip to Africa in the spring."

"To Africa! You really mean it? But there are tigers and crocodiles, and dreadful things like that, are there not?"

"O dear, no: not the genuine Bengal animal; not the splendid striped monster of India. The African tiger is only a paltry spotted thing. There's no credit in shooting such an impostor."

"But that kind of impostor might eat you," cried Laura in terror.

"O dear, no. The genuine man-eater is only to be found in the jungle. Besides, we shall have a tutor with us, to take care of the luggage and coach us in our classical geography, and all that kind of thing; and, as a conscientious person, it will be his duty to be eaten first. Good-bye, Lorry, until this night six years."

"Until this night six years!" repeated the young lady, almost crying; "I think you might kiss me, cousin George, if you are going to stay away as long as *that*."

Lord Abberdale obeyed this hint, heedless of Miss Vicker's murmured protest. He blushed like a girl as he set his lips on the innocent upturned face, bade the governess a hurried good-night, and was gone.

BIRTHDAY THE SECOND.

MISS DE COURCY at twenty-one was a lady of vast accomplishments and considerable experience. She could converse very agreeably, within ballroom limits, in three or four continental languages—could give her opinion of the arrangements of a court-ball in Italian; decline refreshments in Danish; accept a partner for the next waltz in German; and chatter gaily all the evening through in very pure French. She was musical, and had been taught the piano by Madame Arabella Goddard, the harmonium by Herr Engel; and beyond all this, in the eyes of that, unhappily, shallow-minded section of humanity in which her lot was cast, she was undeniably beautiful. The cold-hearted worldling who, when first introduced to her, remembered that she had forty thousand pounds in her own right, had not been half-an-hour in her society before he forgot everything except that she was one of the loveliest and *most charming* of women.

More than one advantageous opportunity of settlement in life had offered itself to Miss de Courcy before her one-and-twentieth birthday; but she had refused the most brilliant of these opportunities without a moment's hesitation. She had been something of a flirt, but had given no man the right to consider himself ill-used by her. She was eminently popular. Men called her a jolly girl, a lovely girl, no end of a nice girl, according to their lights—or their darkness; but all agreed in the broad fact, that she was a good girl—good in the widest sense of the word; a girl to whom the simulation of demi-mondain audacities and the lying arts of Rachel and enamel were “hateful as the gates of hell”—a genuine, true-hearted Englishwoman, worthy to become the mother of brave and noble Englishmen in the time to come.

In the middle of December in that year, a British yacht, built for honest work, and bearing traces of hard usage, lay at anchor off the coast of Norway. This yacht was the *Lorley*, commanded by George Lord Abberdale; and that young nobleman, with three chosen friends, was roughing it in a Norwegian hostelry while the *Lorley* was refitted for her homeward voyage. Lord Abberdale and his companions had spent their summer in the neighbourhood of Baffin's Bay, and having been very fortunate in the matter of sport, were returning to their native shores in excellent spirits and temper. Vasco di Gama or Marco Polo, Columbus or Raleigh, would have been struck with amazement on perusing the notebook of Lord Abberdale, in which was recorded the extent of country that young nobleman had travelled. But the heir of all the ages has the advantage of mediæval explorers, and the day may come when, in the handsome squares and crescents, streets and terraces of Baffin's Town or Behringville, the dwellers of a northern world may marvel to hear how English travellers once perished, forlorn and hopeless, in the regions of untrodden snow.

Lord Abberdale had “gone in” for Arctic exploration, and the last few years of his life had been given entirely to the pursuit of the explorer's renown. He had not even had time to regret his long separation from that favourite cousin who, he had long ago promised himself, should some day be something nearer and dearer than cousinship, pleasant as that tie between them had been to him. He told his love-story to his companions to-night in the Norwegian hostelry. He had no idea that reticence as to the liege lady of his love was a point of honour.

“I shall call that love-story of yours the thousand-and-one nights, George,” said one of his friends. “I'm sure we've heard it a thousand-and-one times. It seems to me rather a spoony notion of yours, falling in love with a chit of fifteen.”

“Fifteen!” cried George, “I've been over head and ears in love with my cousin Laura ever since she was seven. Not having any people of my own, you know, and De Courcy being my guardian, I used to spend my holidays at Courcy; and sometimes in the summer months

used to have a place at Maidenhead, or Old Windsor, or somewhere thereabouts, while I was at Eton, and of course I was always going about the place—boating and fishing—and, in a general way, fishing Old Gooseberry. I was within an inch of drowning Lorry half-a-dozen times or so; but she didn't seem to mind it. And her brother Nel has no end of pluck, and used to take his duckings sweetly."

And then Lord Abberdale told the story of the birthday ball, and placed the treasured slipper, which he carried in a pocket of his log-book, the log and the slipper being about equally sacred in his eyes.

"And you mean to be home in time for the fancy ball?" asked one of his companions.

"I should think I do, indeed! Why, I'd smash the Lorley and every one aboard her sooner than break my word to that dear girl!"

"Then I fancy you'll have a tight squeeze of it," replied his friend. "We haven't been paying much attention to the operations of the ship since we've left off keeping the log. This is the 15th of December and the Lorley won't be ready for sea in less than a week."

"She shall be ready in three days, Hal," roared George; "I'd sooner have a pot of money on next year's Derby than that ball."

"You may do it, with luck."

"I'll do it with luck or without luck," replied George, unmindful of "D.V." piously interjected by Miss Vicker on a previous occasion.

"How about your dress?"

"What dress?"

"Your costume for the fancy ball?"

"I've got that safe enough with the rest of my traps on board the ship," answered George with a laugh; "I had it from a costumier in the neighbourhood of Baffin's Bay."

Late in the afternoon of December 24th, a gentleman might have observed—if travellers generally were not too much occupied with their own affairs to observe anyone—journeying by express, northward to Kelton, the nearest station to Courcy Castle. When the train stopped at this small station, for the special accommodation of this traveller, there was some little difficulty about the luggage, and a certain black case was missing, the temporary loss of which threw the traveller into a fever of rage and impatience.

Happily, it was fished out of some darksome cavern of a luggage-van before the express—snorting defiant and angry snorts all the time he delayed—had snorted itself out of the station, with a farewell shriek of rage at having been detained at so insignificant a halting-place. The traveller glared at the porter who ultimately produced the case with a most appalling glare.

"It's very lucky for you it turned up," he said, "or I should have been very much tempted to break every bone in your body."

"Do you know *who that is*?" asked the porter of the station-master,

when the furious traveller and his black packing-case had been driven away in a fly.

"No—do you?"

"Yes; it's Lord Abberdale, nephew to Mr. de Courcy. He's going to the ball. That's his fancy dress as he's got in that box, I'll lay."

The eventful night had arrived. Lights shone from all the windows of Courcy Castle, and the poor of the district rejoiced and made merry, inasmuch as their dole of this year was double the customary bounty, and that was a royal one. Scarlet cloaks and comfortable blankets, packets of grocery and baskets of wine, had been dealt out with liberal hands. Miss de Courcy had been driving about the neighbourhood all the week in her pretty basket-carriage; and if there were sad hearts or cheerless hearths within twenty miles of Courcy on this cold Christmas-eve, it was by no shortcoming or stint on the part of the Castle that there was sadness and cheerlessness.

In Miss de Courcy's dressing-room there was much excitement as the hands of the little timepiece drew near ten o'clock. At ten o'clock the guests had been bidden; and the guests bidden to this birthday ball included some very important people. It was to be altogether a most brilliant affair; and everybody in the Castle seemed in the highest possible spirits—except Laura, the one person who ought naturally to have been the most joyous of all. The faithful Miss Vicker—still retained as monitor and friend, though for some time superseded as instructress—watched her late pupil with mingled anxiety and wonder, as the young lady sat before the cheval-glass, while her maid was occupied with the solemn task of adjusting her head-dress.

The head-dress was a difficult one, demanding great skill and nicety in the adjustment thereof. It was one of those lofty sugar-loaf head-gears affected by the women of the Middle Ages. Mrs. de Courcy had suggested the powder and patches of the Pompadour period for her daughter's adornment; but the young lady had her own whims, and adhered obstinately to her own fancy.

"I will be a mediæval princess and nothing else, mamma," she said; "and my dress must be cloth-of-gold. I have found the costume in papa's illustrated edition of *Planché*."

Mrs. de Courcy turned up her nose at the conical head-gear.

"Why, the hideous thing must be a foot and a half high," she said. "I'm sure I don't know what you'll look like, child,—you, who are rather too tall at the best of times."

The conical head-gear was ordered, nevertheless; and the trailing robe of cloth-of-gold, with lions and leopards in black velvet laid there-upon, with broideries in spangles and bullion of unutterable splendour. The petticoat was of cherry-coloured brocade; the shoes long and pointed; the ruff a marvel of historical research; the sugar-loaf head-piece an epitome of the old chroniclers; and the result was an embodi-

ment of the grotesquely beautiful. The quaint *moyen-âge* dress imparted something weird and fantastic to the damsel's loveliness. So might appear the vision of long-buried beauty, if we could conjure it from its chilly resting-place; and so might shine, in all the glamour of real loveliness, the ideal princess of a dreaming Spenser.

All the best people within a reasonable distance of Courcy, together with distinguished visitors staying at the Castle, were assembled in the great drawing-room at eleven o'clock. The costumes were good; many of them had figured at the court-balls of fifteen and twenty years ago. The people were agreeable; the arrangements seemed perfection, except to one person, and that person was the mediæval princess.

Mr. de Courcy had several times suggested that the signal should be given to the band in the gallery for the first quadrille, but the necessity made some objection on every occasion.

"The bishop has not come yet, papa," she said; "it would be the worst possible taste to begin dancing before he comes. I consider it so very liberal of him to come at all, especially as he is rather low."

It must be remembered that Miss de Courcy used this last objection word in the ecclesiastical, and not the vulgar, sense.

The bishop came presently, attired as William Penn, in a cheap, but not especially compromising, costume. But his daughters were all there is of the most Pompadour, and his son was attired as Lord Dundreary, and came prepared to afflict the company with weak imitations of Mr. Sothorn. Mr. de Courcy again suggested the signal for the first quadrille, but again Laura resisted.

"There is Lady Louisa Sparkleham, papa. Dobbins walked home from church with her maid last Sunday, and she is coming as Queen Elizabeth, in the costume she wore at Buckingham Palace twenty years ago; and I am sure she is just the sort of person to be offended if my appearance produces no effect; and of course it won't if we're all jogging about in a quadrille."

"I don't see why you need be jogging about," grumbled Mr. de Courcy. "It's eleven o'clock. People expect to be earlier, you know, in the country."

At last the time came when excuses would be no longer accepted. The inevitable signal was given. The band in the gallery began one of Albert's Introductions with a great crash; then a series of smaller pieces—slow, quick, crescendo, tremolo; a plaintive little pianissimo for the cornet, *rallentando*—and off we go into Pantaloon.

The mediæval princess and Lord Dundreary are partners. William smiles benignly on his son from the circle of lookers-on, in spite of his lowness. Is it not written in the dowager Mrs. de Courcy's will that the mediæval princess shall have forty thousand pounds?

"Eleven o'clock," says the inward voice of the princess, "and no sneysweep! *His promise is quite broken now.*"

The thought has scarcely shaped itself in her mind when there is a sudden confusion among the lookers-on. The low bishop is pushed irreverently on one side, Lord Dundreary recoils horror-stricken, the ladies scream in their usual charming manner, as an awful and appalling form plunges clumsily in among the dancers.

A Polar bear—white as the icebergs of his native land, shaggy as the ragged drifts of snow that fringe those icebergs, awful as the dangers of those trackless regions—displaces the bishop's son, and seizes the shrinking hand of the princess in his ponderous paw.

No word spoke this hideous brute; no heed took he of Dundreary's remonstrances, the bishop's indignation, the titters and little screams of the company; but through the mazy figures of the dance—in the solemn settings of L'Été, the see-saw movements of La Poule, the graceful advancements and retirings of Pastourelle, the whirl and riot of final gallopade—did the monster drag the mediæval princess, to the wonder and admiration of the assembled multitude.

When the quadrille was finished, he led the damsel to her parents, and lifting the grim jaw and throwing back the shaggy head as if it had been a knightly visor, the uncouth visitor revealed the countenance of Lord Abberdale.

"I'm afraid I've been very rude to a lot of people," he said; "but you must introduce me to them presently, aunt Sophia, and I must make my peace somehow. I didn't reach the Castle till five minutes before I came into the room. Six years ago, in Hyde-park-gardens, I promised Lorry I'd dance the first dance with her on this night, and I've done it. And, by Jove, I don't much care whom I have offended!"

"But you were to come as a chimneysweep," said Laura.

"Well, you see, I hadn't time to think of the elegancies of costume. I shot this poor beggar—I beg your pardon, Lorry—this unfortunate animal—in Baffin's Bay; and very sorry I was to do it, considering how tame the poor creatures are when they haven't the honour of *our* acquaintance."

"You see I remembered the dress you said you'd like me to wear," Miss de Courcy said later, when a compact of peace, or at least armed neutrality, had been made between Lord Abberdale and the bishop, and these two cousins had danced more than one dance together.

"Yes, darling; and very lovely you look in it. And now there is only one more dress that I languish to see you in."

"Indeed! and what may that be?"

"White, and orange-blossoms."

And to oblige this audacious young nobleman, Miss de Courcy made her appearance in this costume at St. George's, Hanover-square, early in the ensuing April.



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F. W. Lawson, del,

W. L. Thomas, sc

HE STOOPS TO CONQUER.

HE STOOPS TO CONQUER

I.

NEVER more will lady's favour, ribbon from a snowy breast,
Victor-wreathlet won in tourney, gleam upon a knightly breast :
Dreams of chivalry are over, simple service suits love best.

II.

Centre of the gleaming circle sat King Francis, high above
Where a lion roared ; before it there a lady cast a glove,
And Delorme across the barriers leapt to take it, all for love.

III.

Wot we how the story runneth—how he stept back to his place,
Took the glove, and lightly flung it in that haughty lady's face ;
And the thoughtless court applauded all the insult and disgrace.

IV.

Who would win a lady's favour, gentler deeds than this must do ;
When are the chains that bind him when a lover comes to woo ;
Strength in tourney is not needed now to prove him leal and true.

V.

He must claim a rosebud falling from her bosom in the dance ;
He must school his tongue to tender words to win a tender glance :
But our modern Queen of Beauty is not won by broken lance.

VI.

And our modern lover, wooing her whom Aphrodité dow'rs
With immortal beauty, squires her through the evening's magic hours,
Knowing that he stoops to conquer when he lifts the fallen flow'rs.

H. SAVILE CLARKE.

LONDON PARKS

BY WALTER THORNBURY

IV. Hyde Park

THERE is a noble German ballad, written (if we remember rightly) by a certain Von Zedlitz (Powder), which describes—with all the weird imagination of a Doré—how at the twelfth hour of the night a little ghostly drummer once clattered his little drum-sticks and went through the world summoning the soldiers, who, whether in the Nile slime, the desert sand, or the Russian snow-drift, had fallen victims to the ambition of Napoleon. Last of all, when the dark leagues of ghosts had gathered, the dim squadrons had mounted their phantom horses, and the long lines of bayonets had moved into form—mile after mile—there came the stately horseman in the gray coat and the cocked-hat, and passed between the murmuring ranks just as the moon gleamed for a moment and showed the fleshless arms holding the muskets that rattled at his approach.

At such a review of our own summoning we now seem to be spectators; but our ghosts are not the Imperial Guard, or the legions of Davout, Lannes, Massena, and Murat, but the faded beaux and dead dandies of two centuries for ever past. We see, through the fog of the past time and the mists of memory, the shrivelled silk coats, the tarnished sword-knots, the disconsolate periwigs, looming mile after mile, from Holland House to Piccadilly. Black, coffin-like boats of ghostly dandies ferry fast over the gloomy Styx, and Charon drives herds more to the dismal ferry that leads to the ivory gate of dreams. Toupees tower through the mist of cloudland; strawberry-spotted coats rise before our vision; maccaronies in simpering crowds mince past us, all eager for a record of their transient butterfly follies. We sit, like Pluto, enthroned among the shadows.

But, dreams avaunt! let us get back to daylight. One of the foremost idols of the Park in the reign of James II. and Queen Anne was that eccentric man whom Steele has so pleasantly immortalised in the *Tatler*—Beau Fielding, a gentleman of good Warwickshire family, who raised a regiment for James II., and exerted himself in a fashionable way for the dull and bitter bigot, who had made him colonel. Beau Fielding appears to have been a man of some wit and of intense *vanity*, proud and defiant in his eccentricities as became a count of the

German Empire, and a soldier (according to his own account) of the most incomparable chivalry. His complexion was fair; his cascade of a wig auburn; his countenance manly; his stature tall; his form of exquisite proportions, as firm and strong as marble. He was the Adonis of the day, and eventually married the proud, and not too virtuous, Barbara Villiers, daughter and heiress of Lord Viscount Grandison, an Irish nobleman. His first stately proposal to this lady is said to have begun with true humility, thus: "Madame, it is not only that nature has made us two the most accomplished of each sex," &c.

The Beau, when nearly fifty, returned from exile as vain and humorous as ever. If we are not mistaken, he especially rejoiced in yellow plumes and remarkable liveries of extraordinary and obtrusive colours. He did not cringe for homage or admiration; he claimed it as a right. He moved a pattern, a model, an ornament—the very sultan of his sex. He appeared in the Park in an open chariot, so small that it was a mere walnut-shell—emblazoned with the imperial spread-eagle—the better to display his symmetrical limbs and commanding figure.

It must be confessed, indeed, that the old Beau's pomp, vanity, and grandeur trenched at last a trifle on the insane. If we can believe the *Tatler*, Fielding called for tea by beat of drum, and ordered his valet to shave him by trumpet-call. His vanity had reached the point of sublimity; his dress and manner grew every day more and more exotic, and he became so old-fashioned that the boys used to collect and shout round his chariot in the streets. The Beau treated their acclamations with a superb indifference. Steele saw him one day harangue a party of Westminster boys, and has recorded the Beau's irresistible exhortation.

"Go to school," he said, "and do not lose your time in following my wheels. I am loth to hurt you, because some of you might be my children.—Here, you sirrah with the white hair, there is half-a-crown. Why, you young dogs, did you never see a man before?"

"Never such a one as you, noble general!" cried an artful truant from Westminster.

"Sirrah, I believe thee!" cried the Beau, still not impervious to delicate flattery; "there is a crown for thee.—Drive on, coachman."

Alas for the old battered Beau!—a previous marriage was eventually proved against the old Adonis; and the duchess left him to seek shelter in a garret, and there write bad verses of a gallant nature.

About 1770 some fashionable young exquisites immortalised themselves, conferred a blessing on the nation, and earned an undying name by introducing macaroni as an addition to the subscription-table at Almack's. It was about this time that even the folly of modern chignons and crinoline was outdone by the extravagant luxury of the Park dandies. The military maccaronies appeared with red stocks, canes heavy with tassels, and small toy scimitars peeping from under the skirts of their lapelled coats. Their knee-breeches were

of striped silk, and their wigs hung down behind in enormous clubs of plaited hair, bound together with black ribbon. A portrait of a fashionable nobleman of 1773 (George III.) shows us the sort of man who just before the commencement of the American war disappeared in Hyde Park. A vast cocked-hat, looped up with a very small button, shows the taste of the extreme fop. The hair of the wig is combed back from the smug, empty features into a club as large as a ship's cable, which looks not unlike a dumb-bell. The collarless waistcoat—no longer square-flapped, as in Hogarth's time—is bound with gold lace; the cane is double-tasselled; the coat is not much larger than our own frock-coat, and evidently aims at smart airiness and lightness. The small watch-ribbon and pendent seals fall over a pair of silk knee-breeches adorned with coloured spots. A small sword, richly hilted, hangs by the side.

Another character in the Park in those times, not many years before the execution of Dr. Dodd, was that odious and detestable anomaly, the macaroni parson, whom Mr. Percy Fitzgerald has recently dissected so ruthlessly and cleverly. He often appeared sweeping the Hyde-Park turf with his glossy canonicals—his neatly-formed legs adorned with the closest-fitting black silk stockings, very small gold buckles in his shoes, and a one-tiered snowy wig setting off the soft rosininess of his plump cheeks. To the Park the macaroni parson repaired to ogle countesses who frequented his chapel, and ducal ministers whose patronage lay chiefly in the way of church preferments.

We met the other day with an old book of fashions dated 1773. It was a faded old book, the paper yellow and tattered; but there was still a certain perfume about it as in an old *pot-pourri* jar. What a vast interval of folly it shows between the absurdities of 1773 and those of 1867! *Par exemple*:

“GENTLEMEN: Spotted velvet coat and breeches, with fancy coloured frocks for undress. Full dress: light-coloured spotted velvet, lined with pink; satin, fine ratteens, or silks; full-trimmed suit, to walk out; the sleeve on the increase; silk shoes fashionable.

“LADIES: Maroon silk nightgowns, with jewel breast-knot on white ribbons, the *ton* for undress; the upright sausage-curl on the temple is extending. Full dress: dark-grounded silks in flounces, with silver trimmings; stomacher and robings; large hoops, long flowering lap-pets and deep ruffles. Full-dress sacques: maroon, garnet, crimson, or purple satin, with trains longer than usual. French trimming; high shoes.”

Only imagine Mr. Gladstone in a cinnamon-coloured silk coat, and the maids of honour in hoops, sacques, and high-heeled shoes!

But we must pass on to the dandies and other oddities of the Regent's time—dandies whom our own fathers have shaken hands with. In 1815 the Park was more rural-looking than it is now. Captain Gronow describes cows and deer grazing there under the trees. The

paths were fewer, the borders less built on; the air was purer, the company smaller and more select. The middle classes, who now acknowledge no one above themselves, then abandoned the Park to the leaders of fashion and to old money; no shabby-genteel hired carriage then, but the old *régime* of emblazoned hammer-cloths with massive silver badges; solid coachmen in powdered wigs sunk into their downy seats; and plump-legged footmen, powdered gorgeously, hanging in a cluster behind. The dandies who then met in the Park at five wore blue coats with shiny brass buttons, deep stiff white cravats, leather breeches, and top-boots; and a manly dress it was, if a man had a leg worth showing.

The chief beauties in those days were the Duchesses of Rutland, Argyle, Gordon, and Bedford; Ladies Cowper, Foley, Heathcote, Louisa Lambton, Hertford, and Mountjoy. There was the Prince himself, *débonnaire* and (when he chose) amiable, conspicuous for his fine curly wig and portly figure, with Sir Benjamin Bloomfield as his companion on horseback; the florid stout Duke of York and his friend Warwick Lake; the Duke of Dorset on his white horse; the Marquis of Anglesea and his beautiful daughters; Brummell, of course; Lord Harrowby and the Ladies Ryder; the Earl of Sefton and the Lady Molyneux; the Earl of Moreton and his long-tailed grays. Those were the three-bottle days, the days of high play, of pugilism, stage-coach driving, and duelling.

About 1801, one of the most conspicuous characters in the Park was a tall, thin, elderly West Indian, with a sallow wrinkled face, who, wrapped up in costly furs, paraded in the drives in a shell-shaped carriage drawn by two fine white horses. The eccentric but handsome vehicle was covered with the owner's heraldic device—a cock crowing. This shallow, inane, yet cunning-looking man was that celebrated amateur tragedian, Mr. Romeo Coates. He was supposed incorrectly to be a second Cæsar; and he appeared at London balls covered with as many diamonds as Count Esterhazy, who was popularly supposed to drop three-hundred-pounds' worth of them every night he went out. His buttons, even his knee-buckles, glistened with diamonds. Insanely vain and utterly foolish, Romeo Coates appeared on the stage as Shakespeare's youthful lover, first at Bath, and then at the Haymarket. The ridiculous being wore a spangled cloak of sky-blue silk, red pantaloons much too tight, a white-muslin vest, an enormous bolster cravat, a Charles-the-Second wig, and an opera-hat. No burlesque was ever half so funny. He bowed to the audience in the most extravagant way and with a hideous grin; he took snuff in the middle of the balcony scene, and on some one asking him for a pinch handed round his box to the nearest spectators. He dragged Juliet from the tomb as if she were a sack of potatoes. When, finally, he had to die, he put down his opera-hat for a pillow, and swept a place clean with a dirty silk handkerchief. Three times did this extraordinary idiot die for

the amusement of the house. This half fool, half cheat, was at last driven from the stage for pocketing money he had obtained under pretence of playing for a charitable object; he retired to Boulogne, and there married some foolish woman, who was probably duped by his pretended wealth.

But men like Romeo Coates and Peagreen Haine (so called from his favourite costume) were mere passing meteors in Hyde Park; Beau Brummell was the central sun—the Regent's favourite, "the glam of fashion and the mould of form," the cynosure of everybody's eyes, and the best-dressed man of his day. Lord Petersham might invent a coat, and Lord Spencer an eccentric garment; but Beau Brummell was the king of the dandies, the emperor of society, and the successful rival of the proudest nobles of England. Brummell was the son of a steward: having a handsome person, considerable wit and sound tact, and being known at Eton as a good scholar, boatman, and cricketer, he cultivated friends among the young noblemen; and on leaving school entered a crack regiment, and, under the auspices of the Duchess of Devonshire, was soon launched into society. Everything he did, said, and wore was admired as a matter of course. He had the finest Sévres china snuff-boxes, the most exquisite walking-canes; his horses were of the best blood, his carriages of the highest style. His cravat was a marvel (it is supposed he threw away armfuls every day before he attained his success). Men of fashion felt a sort of religious awe as they passed over the threshold of Weston, Brummell's tailor, in Old Bond-street. The incomparable creature used jokingly to declare his very blacking was mixed with champagne. His library in Chapel-street was full of the most *recherché* books; the choicest editions, and, above all, the most exquisite bindings. His furniture was the result of years of study. Nothing could equal the elegance of his manners except his contempt for Bloomsbury-square and the middle class, from a very humble station of which he himself had sprung. Throned in the bay-window at White's Club, with the Duke of Rutland on one side and Lord Alvanley on the other, his frown could destroy the reputation of a passing dandy, and his approval insure success in the *beau-monde*. He was a lawgiver as to pantaloons, and a legislator in the matter of boots. In our degenerate days nothing appears so vulgar as the coarse and offensive impudence of his *bon-mots*, but they were the rage in the three-bottle days; and against this fribble's decision in matters of taste there was for years no appeal. The Regent, who was haughty with a duke, was familiar with Brummell. The tide turned at last, and the Phaeton of Carlton House fell. He dared to thwart Divine Right in its pleasures. He objected to the cruel dis-carding of Mrs. Fitzherbert for another and a less worthy favourite. The Regent at once broke in two the glass idol of Bond-street. He struck him two blows; one was for standing between him and the new *siren*, the second for asking, at Lady Cholmondeley's ball, "Who is

your fat friend?" The second blow was struck in a way worthy of the Regent's mean spirit of revenge. He asked the Beau to dinner, under the garb of reconciliation, and when the Beau had taken rather too much wine, rang the bell, saying to the Duke of York, "I think we had better order Mr. Brummell's carriage before he gets drunk."

It was a strange rise, it was a miserable fall. The tuft-hunter's debts had accumulated like an avalanche, and like an avalanche they soon came rolling down upon him. He became consul at Caen, lost the appointment by some imprudence; and, retaining to the last—even when poor, paralysed, and imbecile—his old affectations, died in Calais, a poor forlorn, drivelling, beggared exile.

Parson Ambrose was another celebrity of the glorious and lamented days of the Regency. He was a natural son of Lord de Blaquiere. He had been a friend of the Duke of Wellington in his early wild days in Dublin, and when in distress in Paris the Duke on one occasion gave him 100*l.* to take him back to town. Captain Gronow describes meeting Parson Ambrose at the Duchess of Orleans' Sunday *soirées* in 1816. The parson, who had the manners of the old *régime*, wore black-silk breeches with buckles at the knees, buckles on his shoes, and shirt-frills of the finest Malines lace.

Lord Petersham was another celebrity of the Park. He was a tall, handsome, hearty-looking man, with a very gracious smile, an affected manner, and a slight lisp. He chose brown as a colour (it is said from his having once been in love with a fair widow named Brown): his carriages were brown, his horses brown, his livery was brown. The shelves of his favourite room were covered with tin canisters, snuff-boxes, and snuff-jars. When some friend one day praised his light-blue Sèvres snuff-box, Lord Petersham said in his dainty, tip-toe sort of way, "Yes, it's a nice summer box, but it would not really do for winter wear." Such was the extravagant foppery, sometimes humorously conscious of itself, that distinguished the gentlemen of the Regency.

In those days, the Four-in-hand Club was one of the great shows and wonders of Hyde Park, for to drive a stage-coach was then considered the perfection of human felicity. Lords and baronets at that period handled the ribbons and took the passengers' fees; and to wear a heavy drab box-coat with six capes, and to talk the slang of the Gravel-lane Cockpit and the jargon of Cribb and Belcher, was to become worthy of Lord Barrymore's friendship, and of the esteem of the excellent Lord Yarmouth and Lord Harborough. Lord Sefton's four bays were as well known then as the stylish turns-out of Sir Bellingham Graham and Mr. Cholmondeley of Vale Royal. The pace of this fashionable club never exceeded a trot, and it was a rule that no coach in their procession should try to pass another.

A little later and we see in the Park, among the smaller celebrities, "King" Allan—a tall, stout, portly viscount—who was a special support of Crockford's. In his youth he had fought well at Talavera, but latterly

became merely an authority with tailors, and an oracle at the Operahouse. He was the man who could not sleep away from the noise of London, and who, when he went to Dover with Lord Alvanley, hired a coach to drive up and down before the hotel-door all night, and the boots to shout at proper intervals, "Past —, and a stormy night!" Like most of the dandies, Lord Allan broke down financially at last, and he ended his days at Gibraltar.

Ball Hughes—"Golden" Ball, as he was generally called—was another character of 1820 or thereabouts. He was a handsome, agreeable man, who had been in the 7th Hussars: he married Mademoiselle Mercandotti, a Spanish opera-dancer. He also died abroad impoverished, after a reckless life of gambling and extravagance.

Of the same date was Byron's friend, Scrope Davis—a scholar, wit, and dandy of the first class. The son of a Gloucestershire clergyman, he played very high, and eventually, half ruined, retired to Paris. He is said on one occasion to have won the entire fortune of a young man of property, and to have returned it to him on his promise to abandon for ever the fatal green cloth.

But in this rapid *résumé* of the dandies of the Regency and later, we must not forget that handsome son of one of Napoleon's generals, Count d'Orsay. To judge from Mr. Chalon's sketches of him, he must have been very handsome. That glory of the Parks thirty years ago was a man six feet high, with a broad chest, narrow waist, and finely-formed feet. His chestnut hair fell in long waving masses; his eyes were hazel; his forehead was high and broad; his features were regular. He was a good swordsman, a fine horseman, and a fair shot. Captain Gronow, who knew him well, says that he was in the habit of taking perfumed baths, and that his enormous gold dressing-case required two men to carry it. He also got over head and ears in debt, and died in Paris in comparative obscurity.

But the ghosts of the dandies press on us in phantom crowds, and clamour for notice. There is Sir Lumley Skeffington, with his high shoulders, and old Q. himself—amorous patriarch; Sir Godfrey Webster, handsome and stalwart dashing Captain Claggett, and elegant Sir Roger Gresley. Beautiful Lady Jersey and enchanting Lady Blessington, you too we must, ungallantly, leave unrecorded, for the whole Magazine would not be large enough even to chronicle the names of the Park beauties of the last half century.

We must now rapidly pass on, and recapitulate a few remaining facts about the Park as it now is, and leave our dandy dreamland regretfully behind us. The colossal Achilles (really not Achilles at all, but a copy from a nameless statue at Rome) was erected in 1822, by the ladies of England, to record the four chief victories of Wellington. It was made from twelve French twenty-four pounders, was cast by Westmacott, and cost 10,000*l*. It is still unfinished—such is national *gratitude* and official expedition!

The gates of the Park represent various phases of public improvement. Decimus Burton designed the handsome triple arch and colonnaded screen, which superseded a nobler and more magnificent design by ingenious Sir John Soane. Stanhope Gate, in Park-lane, was opened, as useful Mr. Timbs records, in 1750, and Grosvenor Gate in 1724. Both were erected by private subscription. Cumberland Gate was opened about 1744. It was originally a mean brick arch: here in 1821 two persons were shot by the Horse Guards on duty during a riot on the day of the funeral of Queen Caroline. In 1822 Mr. H. P. Hope substituted the handsome iron gates that now stand on either side of the Marble Arch, removed from Buckingham Palace in 1851. This costly arch, one of George IV.'s luxuries, cost 31,000*l.*; but the sum included 6,000*l.* for the statue of George IV. by Chantrey, now in Trafalgar-square. The removing and rebuilding cost 4,300*l.* The ridiculous equestrian statue by Matthew Cotes Wyatt on the Green-Park arch was erected in 1846, at the stultifying cost of 30,000*l.* No account has, we believe, been yet rendered to the gratified subscribers.

The Crystal Palace of 1851 needs but brief notice here; it requires a volume to itself. It is interesting, however, to remember that its area was nearly nineteen acres, and that the Palace of Versailles would not have reached much beyond its transept. It contained in its structure about 4,000 tons of iron, and the property it held was more than a million. It cost 176,000*l.*, and 93,000 persons have been counted in it at one time.

The Serpentine, fed by a stream from Hampstead, covers fifty acres: it is formed by natural springs, and is in some places forty feet deep. In the summer, 200,000 persons bathe here annually. The pleasure-boats were introduced in 1847. The Royal Humane Society, founded in 1774, built its chief receiving-house in Hyde Park in 1794. Its offices in this Park alone cost 3,000*l.* a year. Close to them is the Government Magazine, foolishly fortified during the late petty disturbance in the Park, when the Park-lane railings were destroyed.

Near the site of the Receiving-house formerly stood a cottage, once painted by Nasmyth, which George III. gave to a Mrs. Simms, who had lost six sons in war, the last with Abercrombie at Alexandria. On the east side of the Park is the reservoir of the Chelsea Waterworks, which holds 1,500,000 gallons. The dwarf wall was built to prevent suicides, once common here. On the east side there formerly stood a walnut-tree walk, but the trees were cut down for gun-stocks in 1800 or thereabouts.

The duels fought in this Park would require pages merely to chronicle them. Wilkes was wounded here by Mr. Martin in 1763. In 1780 Parson Bate fought Mr. R., of the *Morning Post*. The last duel was, we believe, in 1822, when the Duke of Bedford and the Duke of Buckingham exchanged shots. With this brief summary of many combats we must close our notice of Hyde Park.

The remaining Parks of London are too young to have much history of their own yet. Regent's Park (diameter two miles) was begun in 1812, from designs by John Nash, who wished by means of Regent-street to connect this northern Park with Carlton House. The garden of the Botanic Society was the site of the proposed palace of the Regent. At the entrance of St. Dunstan's Villa (Marquis of Hertford's) are the two wooden figures with clubs that once beat the hour in St. Dunstan's Church, Fleet-street. In the Observatory in the inner circle, Mr. Hind, the astronomer, has made many of his discoveries.

Kennington Park (twelve acres) was taken from the Common in 1852-53. The Common was once the gallows-ground, and the scene of futile Chartist agitations. Prince Albert's model working-man's house stands at the principal entrance of this pleasant and improving spot.

Primrose-hill Park (about fifty acres) was laid out for cricket, and planted by the Commissioners of Woods and Forests about 1853; and Victoria Park, Bethnal Green—290 acres in extent, the size of Kensington Gardens—was purchased in 1842. To the cost of its formation was appropriated 72,000*l.*, the sum received for the remainder of the Crown lease of York House, St. James's (Stafford House). The chief entrance is at Bonner's Fields, where a house once stood traditionally reported to be that of the burning bishop. The Park is a civilising centre in the midst of a miserable district inhabited by poor silk-weavers and makers of lucifer-matches. To make room for it was swept away a whole district of thieves' and beggars' hovels, and to a very overcrowded neighbourhood it is a lungs, a playground, and a promenade. It is something even to get away for half an hour from the noisome alley and the detestable gin-shop. The Park has an arboretum, ornamental water for bathing and boating, and an island with a pagoda on it. Thirty thousand persons often visit this Park in one day. At good Miss Burdett Coutts's drinking-fountain wanderers from Mile End and Bow may be seen quaffing innocently side by side with the artisans of Spitalfields and the denizens of Homerton and Hackney.



ON MARRIAGE SETTLEMENTS

IN the failure of the Royal Bank of Liverpool another great financial calamity has happened. The debts of the Bank are announced to amount to 1,630,000*l.*, and the estimated assets to 1,247,000*l.*; so that, after the total loss of their 650,000*l.* of paid-up capital and 109,000*l.* of reserve, the shareholders will be required to provide for a deficiency of 383,000*l.*; and to make up this sum, after allowing for delays and losses in realising securities, and the inability of shareholders to bear their portion of the disaster, a call is announced of 515,000*l.*, or 20*s.* a share on 51,500 shares.

Vast amounts of this kind lost in great commercial undertakings are read of daily in the papers, and are passed over by the general reader with a vague feeling that some great misfortune has happened, but with little realisation of the infinite misery caused to thousands by it, and more especially to the helpless wives and children of the shareholders. One thing, doubtless, must have constantly attracted the notice of observers, namely, that while some men never recover from their misfortunes, others, perhaps of no greater talent or force of character, after a species of "retreat," as churchmen call it, for a few months, emerge from their temporary obscurity, and, with somewhat clipped wings it is true, move on in their former spheres, little damaged by the past. Sometimes, indeed, the head of a family wholly succumbs to the force of the calamity, and dies, leaving it a bitter legacy to his wife and children. In this case, again, the same difference of lot is remarked; and while some fall into perfectly hopeless poverty, others live on in comparative comfort, perhaps, as regards worldly possessions, relieved by the death of the parent.

In all these cases the cause of this great distinction is the same. For the more fortunate class in times of prosperity family settlements have been made, either on the occasion of a marriage, or at some other time in which funds have been more than usually abundant. "What will become," it is asked, on Tom Brown's failure, "of his unfortunate wife and children?" And the answer is, "O, she will do well enough; she had a very good settlement on her marriage." Perhaps the first thought of the inquirer is, that it was a fortunate thing that Tom Brown married a woman with money; but it by no means follows that this was the case, for the funds settled as probably belonged to the gentleman as the lady. That he married a woman with prudence, or whose friends possessed that most valuable property, is more certain. *And thus it is that among the upper classes people rarely fall*

into irretrievable poverty ; and the subject is one well worthy of general consideration, for family settlements are by no means the exclusive privilege of the aristocracy, but are more and more adopted by the middle classes, and may be suited to all stations.

The law of settlements is now the foundation of the law of real property in this country. People often talk of entails, as if the statute *De donis* were still in full force and operation, and an estate tail in possession were not, as it in fact is, an estate in fee, which the owner can at any time convert into an estate in fee-simple by a deed enrolled in the Court of Common Pleas at Westminster. But the real mode in which great family properties are preserved and dignities supported is by the conveyance of the estates, as each succeeding heir attains his majority or marries, in strict settlement.

At the risk of appearing tedious, we will shortly describe such a settlement. The settlor, who we may suppose the father of the family, on the marriage of his son conveys the estates in such a manner that he retains himself a life-interest only, with remainder, as it is expressed, to his son for life, and with remainder to his son's son in tail, with remainders over. The wife and possible younger children of the son are provided for by a machinery well known to lawyers, by which, by the limitation of successive terms of years, jointures and portions are provided. The settlor cannot tie up the estate further, so as to restrict the unborn grandson to a life-estate with remainder to his issue, this being forbidden by the law against perpetuities. But thus it is that immediately after the settlement is executed the estates cannot be alienated until the majority of the unborn grandson, by whom again, probably on his marriage, they are resettled ; a conveyance in fee-simple, with the consent of the tenant for life, thus becoming possible under the Fines and Recoveries Act.

In this way it happens that a spendthrift heir rarely possesses a greater estate than an estate for life, and cannot squander the patrimony of his children. When there are no family estates to settle, there is very usually personal property—perhaps, in the case of a younger son, the portion provided for him by the family settlement of which we have last spoken ; and this, again, on his marriage, is the subject of settlement.

No prudent man permits the marriage of his daughter without a provision of this kind ; at least when he possesses, or is able to give her, a fair share of money to bring into settlement. In this case there is usually a great distinction made ; a life-interest in the fund, or in a large portion of it, is in the first instance given to the lady for her separate use, free from the control, debts, or engagements of her intended husband ; a life-interest to him follows ; and the capital is given to the children of the marriage on the death of the parents in such shares as they may appoint ; and in default of appointment equally, to *vest* at the age of twenty-one or previous marriage. Under such a

settlement as this, it is evident that the insolvency of the husband does not reduce his wife and children to poverty.

Where there is no property to settle, but the prospect of the engaged couple is of an income only derived from the personal exertions of the intended husband, it might be thought that in this case no settlement could be effected; but this is not so. There is still the resource of a policy of assurance on the husband's life, by which a provision can be effected upon his death; and this policy is usually taken out by him, and granted to him by the office in his own name, and then assigned to trustees by a settlement-deed, in which the trusts of the policy moneys, when received, are declared. Before life-insurance was as well understood as it is now, the bond of the husband frequently fulfilled the office now allotted to the policy; but the bond was an inconvenient instrument, for if it was intended only to be put in force at the husband's death, it amounted to little more than a contract to leave by will a specified sum for the benefit of his wife and children, with a certain amount of priority in their favour in the administration of his assets; while, if the bond were at the option of the trustees to enforce at any time, it left them with a very inconvenient responsibility, and with the choice sometimes of either neglecting their duty or seriously embarrassing their friend by enforcing it. The life-policy is, however, a security in every respect unobjectionable; and it might be thought that no marriage should take place without at least this provision being made for the future. It is undoubtedly of frequent use, but by no means so universal among the middle and lower classes as might be expected; and this may be attributed to several causes, such as the difficulty of obtaining trustees, the bugbear of heavy legal expenses supposed to be attendant upon the preparation of the settlement, and more especially to the fact that marriage settlements among the classes of which we are speaking have not yet sufficiently become a habit.

This being so, it is with considerable satisfaction that we welcome a great improvement in the practice of life-insurance introduced by one of our mutual life-offices,* by which the office issues policies in the nature of settlements, or, as they are appropriately termed, settlement-policies, by which, in consideration of the ordinary annual premium, and with no other attendant expenses, the office undertakes to pay the sum assured direct to the objects of the trust, or, in other words, becomes itself the trustee to fulfil the terms of the settlement. By such policies all the usual trusts in favour of the wife and children may be carried out, the common form being to give the wife the income of the fund, and the capital to the children in such shares as the parents, or the survivor of them, may appoint. It is, moreover, very material to remark, that in a transaction of this kind the constant risks incurred by the mistakes or unfaithfulness of private trustees are

* The Norwich Union Life-Insurance Society.

avoided; for until the money is actually divided, it remains in the hands of the office, either invested in a specific amount of government securities, or retained at interest by agreement with the widow, and invested among its general assets. And this latter would doubtless be the usual mode selected; for, with equal safety for the principal, the Company, which is always investing large sums upon first-class securities, could afford to pay a higher rate of interest than could be obtained by an investment in consols, and yet reserve a margin of interest to pay expenses and leave a profit on the management of the fund.

It may now be remarked by many of our readers—if many have followed us thus far—“This is all very well, but unfortunately we are already married, and settlement-policies can therefore be of no use to us.” This, however, does not appear to be the case. A valuable consideration (as it is termed by lawyers), in opposition to any other, such as natural love and affection, or mere bounty—and marriage, beyond all question, is a valuable consideration—undoubtedly places a contract or settlement in an impregnable position. But there is no reason why any man in solvent circumstances should not make a settlement, and lay aside a portion of his property irrevocably in favour of his wife and children; indeed, as the law now stands, there is only one bar to such a settlement, when it is completely executed, namely, that the law, depending upon a statute as old as the reign of Queen Elizabeth, will not permit such a settlement to be made for the purpose of defrauding creditors; and of this the test is insolvency at the time, or the condition of inability to discharge present debts created by the transfer of property effected by the settlement itself. Hence there is no reason why a settlement should not be made after, as well as before, marriage, and of a policy as well as of any other property. It is, however, curious that the law-courts have repeatedly refused to give effect to voluntary settlements of policies, looking upon them, as well as upon all other assignments of policies, as contracts only; and the rule is, that neither at law nor in equity will effect be given to a voluntary promise. All these difficulties appear to be got rid of by the forms for *post-nuptial* settlement-policies proposed by the office already mentioned. There will be a regularly constituted trust in favour of the wife and children, to which a court of equity will give effect; and consequently this difficulty of giving effect to a mere promise, or, as a lawyer would say, the application of the doctrine of imperfect gifts, does not apply. The office, moreover, having no notice of any improper object in effecting such a policy, and having a right to presume that all is properly done by the settlor in making the proposal for it, is ready to entertain it, and the policy will be good unless actually tainted by a fraudulent intention of the settlor at the time.

A settlement of this kind seems peculiarly fitted for that large class of persons who have gradually risen into affluent circumstances, but who are still liable to the hazards of trade. In such a case, the moral

obligation is all in favour of making a provision for the man's family. His creditors undoubtedly have the first claim upon him, but if, after making the settlement, he remains abundantly solvent, they are not injured by it; and on the reasonable assumption that a man's transactions in business will be in proportion to his capital, it by no means follows that even future creditors will be the worse off for the settlement having been made. There is, in fact, an excessive harshness in the operation of the English law, which has no consideration for the moral claims of a debtor's family. Of course we are aware that this argument is met by the reply, No, the law considers that the creditor's family has the first claim. But it is remarkable that this was not the case under the old feudal law. Landed property—formerly almost the only property of noteworthy value in the times before the creation of national debts, when joint-stock companies were not, and docks, railways, canals, and suchlike undertakings had not been thought of—was only gradually made assets liable to debts in the hands of the heir, and the widow was entitled to dower, in the case of women married, as late as the 31st December 1833, of all fee-simple estates which became her husband's property at any time during her married life, not only in preference to his creditors, but so that he could not even sell and convey them to a purchaser without her concurrence.

For the alteration of the law to its present state, by which the widow's right to dower is subject to the disposition or will of her husband, one of the principal arguments was the great increase of personal property out of which he might make a provision for her; and if so, it would appear entirely consonant with the genius of the English law that the husband should be entitled to make this provision for his wife, out of his personal property, of at least as secure and certain a character as that of which he has so recently been empowered to deprive her in his real estate.

This subject is one to which it is most desirable that the attention of the general reader should be called. The law may be well known to lawyers; but it is important to those who are not lawyers, and to women as well as men, to know something of it on this particular topic, and to weigh what they can learn well with reference to their own condition. To the ladies it is indeed the most important; and our object will have been attained if we induce that portion of our readers who may be married, to inquire whether any and what settlements have been made upon their marriages; and if none, why this important duty was neglected; and if no settlement has been made, what reason there is why some settlement should not now be made, or at least a settlement-policy effected: while to our unmarried friends we would give one word of advice in parting,—that when the happy time comes for them, the all-important question of the settlement should not be forgotten.

"LE ROI EST MORT. VIVE LE ROI!"

JANUARY 1868.

I.

THE snow-crust glitters in diamond lustres,
The bare black boughs are creaking;
And the red berries hang in tangled clusters
For the robin his banquet seeking;
And the winds are sighing
For the year that is dying—
For the year that is soon to be o'er.
One by one we are meeting,
Hands and hearts are greeting:
"Le Roi est mort. Vive le Roi!"

II.

It hath gone—let the dead year its own dead bury;
Turn over the page long told:
Let the Past dare mourn, if we dare be merry;
Life hath many a milestone of gold.
No tears, no sighing,
For the year that was dying—
For the year that this moment is o'er;
What though Time be fleeting,
Hands and hearts are greeting:
"Le Roi est mort. Vive le Roi!"

III.

Ring, ring out, ring ever,
With your best endeavour,
Silver chimes, in exultant tone;
In our hearts hope dancing,
In our eyes love glancing,
From the churl to the sov'reign's throne.
Ah! away with sighing,
Though the year *was* dying,
The old fellow's throes are now o'er;
Sing with hearts high beating,
Sing with eye-smiles meeting:
"Le Roi est mort. Vive le Roi!"

A. H. B.

THE GRAND DUCHESS

Or the Cupidity of Monsieur Quibosch

BY GEORGE AUGUSTUS SALA

Yes, Monsieur Quibosch, the world shall know of your cupidity. A chiel was at your *gasthof* taking notes the summer before last, Quibosch, and aith he'll prent 'em. You thought with impunity to overcharge a poor harmless British traveller (did you? Q.), with no other luggage but a small railway-portmanteau—I bought it at Milan for twenty-five lire in the Via del Giardino—and then to slay him with your scorn, telling him that you did not care about tourists who were unaccompanied by couriers, and who were not prepared to pay twelve and a half—*rinkgeld* not included—for a rickety berline over the Can' Grande Pass, when, as everybody knows, a seat in the *diligence coupé* only costs eighteen francs twenty-five cents. Couriers forsooth! But it was through the agency of a courier that you yourself were brought at last to shame, my Quibosch.

We have only ourselves to thank, it seems to me, if we are the most persistently impudently fleeced people who travel on the Continent. In the first place, it has only been from a very recent period that we are cared about acquiring a knowledge of foreign languages. The elderly and the middle-aged among us are, as a rule, painfully deficient in even the elements of French; and the rising generation, when it is not been carefully put to school in France or Germany by its parents, possesses only a smattering of foreign gibberish, fluent enough to pass current at boarding-school examinations in England, but all but useless when the smatterer comes abroad. The outcry we make at home against the over-attention to classical studies exacted from our youth is an excuse for their ridiculous deficiency in modern tongues. There is none for every English schoolboy—granting him plenty of play-hours—learn at least twice as much as he now learns; and there is not the slightest reason why a lad should not become a good Greek and Latin scholar, and gain at the same time a competent mastery of French and German. Now foreigners in all the great towns and resorts of Europe learn our language—learn very often to speak it currently and colloquially—without ever having been to England; and, as a natural consequence, they make us pay for the linguistic lessons they have taken.

We buy their Ollendorffs for them ; we disburse the fees of their professors ; we pay through the nose for every verb they conjugate, and every phrase they parse. "Nunkey pays for all;" and Nunkey is the English *milor*, or his emulator the commoner. Quibosch would not have cheated me in so barefaced a manner had he not known I was an Englishman. I would write to the *Times*, would I? Bah! Quibosch knows full well that no amount of writing to the newspapers will diminish hotel-charges or take away the custom from a noted house. I would communicate with the editor of *Murray*, would I? Pshaw! Quibosch snapped his fingers. He was quite as well aware as I was that, did even the editor listen to my remonstrances to the extent of placing comminatory asterisks against his house in the next edition of the Handbook of Greedyland, there would be numbers of travellers who would patronise his hotel from a sheer spirit of contradiction, and declare that all I had said about his extortionate tariff and the insolence of his waiters was pure moonshine ; that there would be equal numbers of Anglo-Saxon wanderers who never read *Murray*, but pinned their faith to *Baedeker*, or *Appleton*, or *Bradshaw*. "There are more fish in the sea than ever came out of it," the supposititious Quibosch might remark. "You will never enter my house again, won't you? *Faites comme vous voudrez*. Your enemy will come, and your mother-in-law and your wife's sister, yea and the babe that is unborn—in time. A new fool is born every minute. Ten years ago I was a waiter at the 'Three Devouring Giants' at Basle, and I am determined not to sell the 'Monsterhof' at Grünwaldtichen, which I have now the honour of keeping, for less than a million francs. I have made a handsome fortune out of the Englanders, who always paid, always grumbled, and always came back again ; and I wish you a very good morning."

Ah, Quibosch, your arguments were terribly logical, and your prophecies usually came true ; but you were bitten once, my friend ; once, at least, did even-handed justice commend the poisoned chalice—which in the form of inferior *vin ordinaire* you had so frequently sold as St. Julien *première qualité* at six francs a bottle—to your own lips. Do you remember Luigi Scampidoglio, courier to her Imperial Highness the Grand Duchess Eudoxia Fedorowna of Crim Tartary? Aha! Luigi *rather* took what is termed a "rise" out of you, Monsieur Quibosch.

When I say that Quibosch cheated me from the moment I entered his Trophonian cave to the moment I quitted it, I daresay I am only repeating what five hundred English travellers have said before without obtaining the slightest redress for their grievances ; but I am bound in justice to Quibosch to add that he does not confine his attentions in over charging to the subjects of her Majesty Queen Victoria. The Latin races, indeed, he refrains from swindling ; for, from the Frenchman, the Italian, or the Spaniard, he knows full well there are no extravagant profits to be extracted. They will pay for just so much as they have

and—and often barely for that—but not one maravedi beyond ; but the Englishman only shares his *petits soins* with the Americans and the Crim Tartars. Of the last-named nation Quibosch is awfully fond. They have such a lot of money. He scents the steppes from afar off, and hangs up a chromo-lithograph of the city of Samarcand in his bureau. He provided Genghis Khan with funds after that noble chieftain had been “cleaned out at Hombourg,” leaving his gold chronometer and the star of the first class of the Tartar order of “Catch-him-alive O !” set in diamonds as security. The Princess Timour stayed at the “Monsterhof” when her children were ill with the hooping-cough, and Quibosch did not fail to charge for those little ailments in the bill, I promise you. He was very nearly changing the sign of the “Monsterhof” to the “Hotel Tamerlane.” Peter the Great and General Washington divide his patriotic admiration. Mare’s-milk for breakfast! “*Adolphe, deux litres de lait de jument pour Monsieur, et marquez cinquante francs sur la note.*” “Horseflesh for dinner!” with all the pleasure imaginable. “*Chef, see that roast fillet of two-year old is served in the second course for Prince Blinkerskoff’s dinner.*” If Prince Blinkerskoff had expressed a desire to administer the knout all round to the waiters and chambermaids as a diversion after dinner, Monsieur Quibosch would have found means to gratify the whim, and a very pretty figure it would have made in his highness’s bill. “*Cinq cents coups de knout à deux francs le coup, mille francs.*”

The “Monsterhof” at Grünwaldtichen is the handsomest hotel in the Canton of Grabs, and perhaps in the whole Federal Republic of Greedyland. It is charmingly situated on the left bank of the famous Lake of Schwindelschein. The view of Mount Iscariot and of the curious chain of little peaks called the “Forty Thieves” from the front windows of the “Monsterhof” is charming ; and you are charged handsomely for looking at them. The laws of the Canton of Grabs are, for a republic, somewhat despotic ; and I have been told that there is an old law enacting that any traveller presuming to complain of the charges at a *gasthof* shall, on the case being proven to the burgomaster’s satisfaction, be forthwith cast into the blue waters of the Lake of Schwindelschein with a pig of lead tied to each foot : nay more, that any tourist convicted of disrespect to the *oberkellner*, or head-waiter, suffer fifty blows on the small of his back with an *alpenstock*, and do penance in a white sheet—one of the hotel sheets, charged four francs fifty in the bill—in the public market-place of Grünwaldtichen. Be this as it may, it is certain that they carry things with a very high hand at the “Monsterhof.” I may hint that I knew Quibosch first when he was a mere plate-scraper and dish-washer at the “Three Devouring Giants” at Basle, when he was very glad to pull my boots off at night, and to perjure himself up to the eyes with asseverations that the halfpenny Vevay cigars, in which he drove a trade, were real Havanas of the

choicest brands: but when he became landlord of the "Monsterhof"—and goodness only knows how he raised sufficient capital to embark in that vast enterprise—he began to put on airs, sent his eldest son to learn the art of waiting at the Hôtel de Russie at Frankfort—a hostelry, by the way, where travellers are *not* cheated, but, on the contrary most bounteously and moderately entertained—and kept a carriage and ponies for the use of Madame Quibosch and the children. You could hire the pony-carriage, when Madame was not using it, for an excursion to the base of Mount Iscariot, or the "Forty Thieves" group, and the charge was forty francs a day.

There was nothing whatever to be said against the cleanliness or the commodiousness of the "Monsterhof." In architectural splendour it was a palace—I know not how many stories high; in comfort it might have rivalled many an English nobleman's mansion. Hot and cold baths, plenty of gas, plenty of towels, washhand-jugs as big as the Portland vase, an English Church-service and subscription books for the British Episcopal Chapel at Grünwaldtichen (Rev. Hugh Hango Hollowpenny, M.A., chaplain) in every bedroom; *Galignani*, the *Times*, and the *Illustrated London News* taken in; brown Windsor soap supplied twice a week, and charged one franc fifty a cake, whether you used it or not; good beds, thick blankets, plenty of pillows; doors that would shut, and bells that would ring; capital tea; and everybody in the house, from the head-waiter to the boots, conversant with English: all these showed that Monsieur Quibosch had attentively studied the idiosyncrasies of the British nation, and was only too ready to consult their little prejudices. You could even get Seidlitz powders and blue-pills at the bar. Quibosch took care to inform guests of recognised social position that he was a Protestant; and indeed he was the owner of the building used as the British Episcopal Chapel. The Reverend Hugh Hango Hollowpenny, M.A., was a permanent resident at the "Monsterhof;" and rumour whispered that the Reverend, in the intervals of his sacerdotal duties, which were of the lightest, used to travel up and down the lake in the steamers during the summer season pointing out to tourists the great advantages to be derived from staying at the "Monsterhof." Two pounds a week and the run of his teeth were the honorarium bestowed by the generous Quibosch for the mingled duties of preaching and touting.

You may ask, now that I have granted the "Monsterhof" to be clean, handsome, and comfortable, what on earth I can find to quarrel at in Monsieur Quibosch or his establishment. I simply plead his Charges, and I refer to my five hundred or five thousand fellow-sufferers who have been swindled by his unconscionable self and his more unconscionable wife. Madame was worse than Monsieur. There was some compensation, when your bill was given you, in quarrelling with the man, in giving him a piece of your mind, and in threatening to kick

him when he was insolent. But you could do nothing with the feminine Quibosch. She was really a very pretty little woman, with a trim figure and a pair of laughing black eyes. That which was anti-angelic in her nature was only shown in her lips, which were ominously thin. She dressed charmingly, and spoke the prettiest broken English imaginable ; and when she had the making out of the reckoning, the manner in which she charged might have put the heroic Six Hundred at Balaclava to shame. The rogue Quibosch was quite alive to the advantage which the sex and the personal attractions of his partner gave to the firm ; and when a particularly stiff bill was in question, and a robust and stubborn Englishman the remonstrant, he generally contrived to have something to do in the kitchen, and did not appear again until the explosion was over and the bill was paid. For the Americans and the Crim Tartars he did not care so much. Their complaints were faint, and they generally surrendered at discretion. " I would turn those grumbling English out of my house altogether," the candid Quibosch used to say ; " only they drink so much, and from drinkables come the great profits." Many of the Americans are teetotalers, and their ladies never take anything but tea and cold water. The Crim Tartars drink only champagne ; they know what good champagne is, and they will have it good ; and only a modest *bonéfice* can be got from Veuve Cliquot. Now, you may give an Englishman wine, and he will grumble ; but he will drink it, and pay. He must drink ; he is always thirsty. Let him grumble on. Crafty Monsieur Quibosch !

There is a great fair held at Grünwaldtchen about the middle of every June. The fair-ground is on a piece of waste land between the " Monsterhof" and the bank of the lake, and a very pretty sight it is to see the peasant lads and lasses dressed in the picturesque costumes for which the Canton of Grabs is so remarkable. Rumour again—spiteful rumour—has declared that there are in reality no picturesque costumes in the Canton of Grabs at all, and that the normal attire of the peasant lads and lasses is mainly composed of fustian and corduroy and Manchester cotton prints. Evil-minded gossips go so far as to say that the whole fair—bright dresses, shows, roundabouts, and all—is a kind of masquerade gotten up by the astute Quibosch to attract visitors to his hotel ; that he engages so many rope-dancers, sword-swallowers, bearded ladies, and calves with six legs, from Basle ; that he contracts for a certain consignment of lollipops and gingerbread on sale or return ; and that the sham fair yields him a pretty penny every year. I need not say that I entirely repudiate the responsibility of these malevolent statements. The fair, be it genuine or spurious, is a very jolly little carnival indeed, and the dancing on the greensward at night is something quite delicious.

The " Monsterhof" is usually full to the attics at fair-time, and for

his front rooms the audacious host never fails to charge five-and-twenty per cent extra. The summer of 18— was a very fine one, and it was during the middle of June that Monsieur Quibosch received a letter of advice, *viâ* Lugano and the Can' Grande Pass, from his dear friend and old business associate, Luigi Scampidoglio, a native of the Canton of Trickino—a debatable country between Greedyland and Macaronica, but pertaining unquestionably more to the last than to the first—then exercising the honourable profession of travelling courier to an exalted family. "Great news, my Joseph!"—Quibosch's Christian name was Joe—wrote Scampidoglio from the Hôtel de la Ville at Milan. "Her imperial highness the Grand Duchess Eudoxia Fedorowna of Crim Tartary, with her family and suite, will be with you in eight days. We are coming to see the fair. You must turn everybody out of your house. We are twenty-seven souls in all. We come in ten post-carriages. A steamer must be sent to meet us at the Can' Grande side of the lake. Let a lunch be prepared at Bel Demonio. We want the whole of the 'Monsterhof' for five days. We are a chamberlain and a groom of the chambers, a *maître d'hôtel*, four footmen, a secretary, a French governess, an English tutor, a Scotch nurse, three ladies'-maids, two grooms, her Imperial Highness, the charming young Prince Wumpkin, and the equally charming Princesses Smoochina and Toddlekina. Make us welcome, O my Quibosch, and *charge accordingly*. Yours till death, LUIGI SCAMPIDOGGIO."

Monsieur Quibosch rubbed his hands when he received this missive. Madame Quibosch rubbed her hands too—and very pretty hands they were. "This will be a grand affair," said Quibosch gratefully. He sent to Basle for a new set of ledgers. He dreamt of making out bills headed, "*Doit, son altesse impériale la Grande Duchesse Eudoxia Fedorowna.*" He had some difficulty in persuading his guests to remove temporarily from the "Monsterhof" to afford accommodation for the incoming imperial party. Old Mrs. Mash, the rich brewer's widow of Nantwich, flatly refused to move out of the house for any duke or duchess on earth; but on Quibosch representing that the grand ducal children were only just recovering from the chicken-pock, she decamped incontinent. "She will come back next year," Quibosch remarked. "The Reverend Mr. Hollowpenny can do anything with her." J. Diddler, Esq., of London, was so disgusted at being requested to evacuate his apartments, that he went away without paying his bill, and was subsequently heard at Geneva to express his opinion that the Grand Duchess Eudoxia Fedorowna was no better than an adventuress. The rest of the inmates of the "Monsterhof" took the affair goodnaturedly enough. Some of them felt rather complimented than otherwise at being requested to turn out for a member of the imperial family of Crim Tartary. Archdeacon Pimmins was delighted. Mrs. and the Misses Pimmins proposed to leave their cards on her Imperial Highness. Lieutenant-colonel

Jumperbow, C.B., had known the princess's chamberlain, Count Bagofbran, at St. Petersburg. For the rest, Monsieur Quibosch could do pretty well as he liked at Grünwaldtichen; so he quartered his guests out at divers hostelryes over which he exercised influence—the "Goose and Golden Eggs," the "Smiling Elephant," the "Purple Pig," and the "Great Panjandrum," kept, as you know, by Buttontop, and an inn only second in importance to the "Monsterhof" itself.

Thoroughly swept and garnished from roof to basement was M. Quibosch's establishment on the momentous morning of the Grand Duchess's arrival. "Let there be not such a thing as gas in the whole house," said Monsieur Quibosch, "save in the kitchen for roasting. Let me hear of nothing but wax candles." About noon an *avant-courier* arrived. Quibosch kissed him on both cheeks. One of the most dignified of the waiters assisted him to take off his jack-boots. Madame Quibosch regaled him with cherry-brandy from her own private liqueur-case. The journey across the Can' Grande Pass had been made, he said, in safety. The imperial party were about to take steamer at Bel Demonio. They would be at Grünwaldtichen by three o'clock. He had been sent on before, for the Grand Duchess could not bear that Luigi Scampidoglio should quit her presence. She could not take her anisette without his assistance. He was invaluable to her. "He always was invaluable," said M. Quibosch enthusiastically. "He is a treasure. He is my heart-friend. Have some more cherry-brandy, my brave." And the *avant-courier* had some more of the cordial accordingly.

True to their time the imperial party arrived at three P.M. Archdeacon Pimmins and family hovered about the landing-stage. The Misses Pimmins declared the Grand Duchess charming and the children lovely. Old Mrs. Mash, still in a rage at being turned out of her comfortable bedroom, declared that Eudoxia Fedorowna was forty-five, if she was a day. The youthful Prince Wumpkin she stigmatised as a rickety little brat, and she pitied the mother of the Princesses Smoochina and Toddlekina for having two little frights with red hair and who squinted. Lieutenant-colonel Jumperbow, C.B., bowed very cordially to Count Bagofbran, who did not seem to remember having met him in St. Petersburg; and in the smoking-room of the "Smiling Elephant" that evening, the gallant colonel, over his third tumbler, said sundry ferocious things concerning confounded foreigners, who gave themselves a dashed deal of dashed airs. The Reverend Hugh Hango Hollowpenny, in remembrance of the kindly feeling existing between the Church of England and that of Crim Tartary, was permitted to retain his quarters at the "Monsterhof." It is true that Count Bagofbran mistook him for one of the waiters, and asked him severely, on the second morning, why there was no fresh caviare at breakfast; but Mr. Hollowpenny was a meek ecclesiastic, and took care that his little book of subscriptions should be brought to her

Imperial Highness every forenoon with her copy of the *Indépendance Belge*.

The Grand Duchess Eudoxia Fedorowna duly remained five days at the "Monsterhof." As her Imperial Highness was a martyr to chronic neuralgia—which the evil-minded declared, again, was nothing but a cross temper—and rarely quitted her apartments, the pleasure she derived from the Fair of Grünwaldtichen was, to say the least, questionable. The blinds of her sitting-room windows were always kept closely drawn down, so that she could not have seen much of the fun of the fair. She had been wandering about in this manner, from Greedyland to Macaronica, from Paris to Rome, from watering-place to mountain resort, from spa to spa, for twenty years, followed everywhere by the blessings of hotel-keepers, and the good wishes of the secretaries of charitable institutions, to which she never failed to contribute liberally. She had not seen her native land for a very long time, not being on the very best of terms with her imperial brother, the Khan of all the Tartars.

Luigi Scampidoglio, the courier—he formerly travelled, as you remember, with Lady Bellarvon, and afterwards went to the Holy Land with Lord Hillandale, the Marquis of Mountrocket's eldest son—appeared to have great influence over the Grand Duchess. He certainly gave himself great airs, and lorded it over the chamberlain, an elderly Tartar, who wore stays and had a weakness for curaçoes and piquet. Luigi was a stalwart varlet, with very white teeth and very black bushy whiskers, and as energetic, shifty, plausible, roguish a fellow as travelling couriers usually are. You may have met him lately at Rome. He keeps the hotel "Del Matto Forestiere," so liberally patronised by the British aristocracy, on the Piazza di Spagna. Luigi, during the grand ducal stay, "kept the thing going"—to use the vulgar term. The consumption of Veuve Cliquot and Roederer was enormous. The Grand Duchess's four lap-dogs had chicken, cream, and macaroons twice a day. All the ponies in the neighbourhood were put under an embargo to convey the suite to the base of Mount Iscariot and the group known as the Forty Thieves. The new set of ledgers became half full of entries, and Monsieur Quibosch rubbed his hands more gleefully every day.

It was Scampidoglio who paid the bills, under the supervision of the chamberlain: that is to say, he told Count Bagoffbran how much he wanted, and that nobleman disbursed the required number of thousand franc-notes. Early on the morning fixed for the Grand Duchess's departure, the courier waited on the chamberlain bearing a roll of paper as big as a barrister's brief. It was THE BILL.

"How much?" asked the grand ducal official.

"It is twenty-five thousand francs," replied Scampidoglio with a bow.

"Sainted Alexander Newski!" exclaimed the count. "Twenty-five thousand francs!—six thousand roubles! What a thief the man of the house must be!"

The sum demanded seemed so enormous that the chamberlain declared he must first consult the Grand Duchess. Her Imperial Highness condescended to remark that she would consult her courier. Scampidoglio, on being consulted, respectfully submitted that the charge, heavy as it seemed, was in reality warranted by M. Quibosch's large outlay, and by his having been bound to dismiss all his ordinary guests to accommodate the imperial train.

"*Payez*," quoth the Grand Duchess with a yawn. "Give me a *petit verre* of anisette, and let Dodo have his lunch." Dodo was a Dutch pug, one of the Princess Eudoxia's four canine favourites. What were a thousand pounds sterling to her? Had she not an appanage of fifty thousand a year from her brother, the Khan of all the Tartars; and did not her dead husband, the Grand Duke Mazeppa, leave her two gold mines in the Oural?

"'Twas rather a bold bill, O my brother," Scampidoglio remarked, as he handed over twenty-five thousand franc-notes to Monsieur Quibosch.

"What would you have?" Quibosch answered, shrugging his shoulders. "The times are so hard and provisions are so dear."

But he rubbed his hands with greater glee than ever as he secured the notes in a leathern portfolio with a patent lock, and, offering Scampidoglio a penny cigar, asked him if he would not take a *petit verre* before starting.

"And my commission?" the courier suggested, very slowly and deliberately, biting off the top of the penny cigar.

"Your *what*?" said Monsieur Quibosch, as though he were somewhat deaf.

"My commission—my percentage on this tremendous bill."

"*Ma foi*," replied Monsieur Quibosch, "I have ceased to give commissions to couriers. To tell you the truth, friend of mine, the reputation of the 'Monsterhof' is now so thoroughly established that there is no longer any need for me to bribe servants in order to procure patronage. Could your Crim-Tartar folks have gone to the 'Elephant'? Could they have gone to the 'Panjandrum'? No; they came here, as a matter of course. Milor Boofle, British Minister Plenipotentiary to the Voracious Confederation, always descends here."

"Oho, my good, my dear friend, 'tis thus you talk!" Luigi Scampidoglio muttered between his teeth. "We shall see, my friend; we shall see."

His face turned very white, and his bushy black whiskers bristled in an ugly manner. Quibosch grew slightly nervous.

"You and I are not likely to quarrel about trifles," he resumed.

"As I have said, I give no more commissions to couriers; and that too is Madame Quibosch's determination. But, so far as a hundred francs go, they are quite at your service as a compliment."

"A hundred francs!" echoed the courier, more slowly than before.

"Well, say a hundred and twenty-five. 'Tis just an English five-pound note."

"Beast! cow!" roared Luigi Scampidoglio. "To the bottom of the Lake of Schwindelschein you and your five-pound notes and your cat of a wife!"

"Pig!" screamed Monsieur Quibosch, not unjustifiably incensed at this ungrateful requital of his liberal offer.

They did not fight. Peachum knew his brother Lockit too well to come to fisticuffs. Luigi Scampidoglio lighted the penny cigar, shortened the strap of his courier's-bag round him, closed the pouch with a snap, and looking steadily in the landlord's face, said, "You shall pay for this, miscreated rat. Next year, Joseph Quibosch, *we shall return to Grünwaldtichen.*"

"Ah, bah! I know better. The Grand Duchess never goes to the same place two years running."

"I say, Joseph Quibosch, that we shall return to Grünwaldtichen at this very time next year;—even the fair week."

"I suppose you will go to the 'Elephant'?"

"We shall *not* go to the 'Elephant.'"

"Or to the 'Panjandrum'?"

"Nor to the 'Panjandrum,' nor to any rival hostelry. We shall return to Grünwaldtichen. You shall hear it from the chamberlain's own lips."

In half-an-hour afterwards the grand ducal party were ready to proceed to the landing-stage, there to take steamer for Bel Demonio. Her Imperial Highness had hitherto only responded to the manifold bows of Quibosch by a haughty inclination of the head; but as she stepped on the gangway of the steamer, she turned, smiled quite graciously, and said, "Adieu, Monsieur Quibosch! We shall be here next June."

"Yes, we shall be here next June," repeated Count Bagoffbrau, wagging his head.

"We shall be here next June," joined in Scampidoglio.

"I don't mind making it five hundred francs," Monsieur Quibosch whispered, as the courier jumped on board.

"Wait until next June," was Luigi's reply.

A year passed away, and the merry month came round again. About the end of the first week Monsieur Quibosch received a letter from another dear friend of his residing at Strasburg, the landlord, indeed, of the "Buy-a-broom Girl," that well-known hostelry on the Grande Place. "The city is full of Crim Tartars," wrote Monsieur

Bouleau of the "Buy-a-broom Girl." "Her Imperial Highness the Grand Duchess Eudoxia Fedorowna and suite came here from Baden six days since. They spend enormously. I have given her courier-in-chief, Luigi Scampidoglio, a diamond ring and a thousand francs as commission. He is a black-hearted thief; but one must bribe these wretches. I know it so well, from my own experience as a courier. They are all coming to Grünwaldtchen at the end of the week. It will be a good thing for you, my Quibosch, for Scampidoglio speaks most enthusiastically of your treatment of him last year."

Monsieur Quibosch wavered between hope and fear. The grand ducal party were coming to Grünwaldtchen; but why had not the courier written to announce their intended descent at the "Monsterhof"? Well, her imperial highness was an eccentric princess; she had probably deemed her parting intimation last year a sufficient command that everything was to be prepared for her reception in the following month of June. To make things sure, however, Monsieur Quibosch went round to the "Smiling Elephant," and the "Great Panjandrum," and, indeed, to all the other hotels and lodging-houses in Grünwaldtchen. At none of these establishments had apartments been retained for the distinguished party from Strasburg; but the landlords and landladies had all heard of their approaching arrival, and they all concurred in congratulating Monsieur Quibosch on the renewal of grand ducal patronage which his hotel was about to enjoy. "Lucky dog!" cried old Von Tronck of the "Elephant," digging Quibosch in the ribs. "Another two years such as this and the last, and you will be able to retire," said Buttontop of the "Panjandrum," offering the lucky landlord of the "Monsterhof" his snuff-box.

"That droll dog Scampidoglio probably meditates a surprise for us," Quibosch suggested to his wife. "On the whole, I rather regret that I was so sharp about the commission. I really must give him a Geneva watch this time and eight or nine hundred francs. Perhaps he only drew back, and affected to be indignant last year, in order to drive a harder bargain with me when he came again."

Madame—as shrewd a woman as ever made out a bill—was also inclined to be of this opinion; and the pair resolved to make the customary preparations for the reception of the illustrious tourists. Had they not the united and verbal assurance of Princess, Chamberlain, and Courier, that they were coming? So the house was swept and garnished again, and once more were the ordinary guests persuaded to take up quarters elsewhere during the fair-week. Quibosch had somewhat harder work to accomplish this object than had been the case in the preceding June. Old Mrs. Mash had quite withdrawn her custom from the house, and was now installed at the "Elephant." Archdeacon Pimmins and family declined to patronise the "Monsterhof" any longer, owing to some reports he had heard not altogether favourable

to the moral character of the Rev. Hugh Hango Hollowpenny, M.A.; and Lieutenant-colonel Jumperbow, C.B., had gone off to Interlachen in a passion. But in lieu of these there was another bevy of British tourists, and many of their number evinced considerable reluctance to decamp. At last, however, Quibosch succeeded in clearing his house. All the waiters were arrayed in fresh white neckcloths, and all the chambermaids in new lace caps, and every one was on the tiptoe of expectation.

On the appointed day—the first one of the fair—the Grand Duchess Eudoxia Fedorowna of Crim Tartary, her family and suite, arrived at Grünwaldtichen. The distinguished party did not come by steamer from Bel Demonio, but by highroad from Basle. They came in ten carriages; and in the rear of this procession came two long vans, something between hearses and closed omnibuses, which were drawn each by four fat horses of the Percheron breed, and ridden by postillions in jack-boots and bag-wigs.

"Why didn't they send an *avant-courier*?" Madame Quibosch asked rather nervously of her spouse.

"*Que diable!* what do they bring *sourgons* for?" Monsieur Quibosch muttered, when he saw the long vans.

The *cortège* drove along the quay which skirts the lake in front of the town of Grünwaldtichen. They drove up to the hotel of the "Monsterhof," Joseph Quibosch proprietor; and then the *cortège* came to a halt. But the Grand Duchess Eudoxia Fedorowna did not alight to enter Monsieur Quibosch's hospitable portals. In front of the "Monsterhof" was the fair-ground, and amidst the booths and the roundabouts a vacant space of turf had been for some days carefully staked out. Over that area Monsieur Quibosch had no control; it belonged to the burgomaster and syndics of Grünwaldtichen. Do you know what this cruel Crim-Tartar princess, acting under the demoniacal inspiration of Luigi Scampidoglio, had the hard-heartedness, the dishonesty, the audacity to do? *She and her train of tutors, governesses, maids, and grooms, positively encamped on the vacant plot of grass!* The horses were taken out of the carriages and picketed; temporary huts of green boughs were run up for stabling; a cooking-tent was pitched, and in a short time numbers of cooks and *marmitons* in white caps and jackets began to run about with copper stewpans, from which issued a savoury steam. The Grand Duchess was hungry, and wanted her lunch.

Quibosch stood at the door of his den—a dragon robbed of his prey—as though rooted to the spot; his wife behind him, trembling. To him approached Luigi Scampidoglio, who, deliberately lighting a penny cigar, looked steadily in his friend's face, and said,

"Her imperial highness would speak with you, *mon bon*."

The wretched man approached the grand ducal carriage; Eudoxia Fedorowna extended her head from the window, and smiled upon him

quite graciously. "*Bon jour*, Monsieur Quibosch," her imperial highness had the affability to observe. "You see we have kept our promise in coming back to Grünwaldtichen. The weather is so warm that it is quite delightful to camp out, Monsieur Quibosch."

"Yes, we have come back," added her highness's chamberlain. "We want to economise this year, Monsieur Quibosch. We don't think our bill will be more than twenty-five thousand francs, Monsieur Quibosch."

"And we intend to give no more commissions to couriers, Monsieur Quibosch," Luigi Scampidoglio whispered, as a *coup de grâce*.

They stayed a whole week in the fair-ground, and nearly drove Quibosch mad. He asserted an implied promise, and threatened law-proceedings; but the burgomaster and syndics laughed him to scorn. Nobody pitied Monsieur Quibosch; he does not take Crim Tartars in any more; but he "takes in" English people and Americans more extortionately than ever.

THE QUEEN OF THE REALM OF A MILLION DELIGHTS

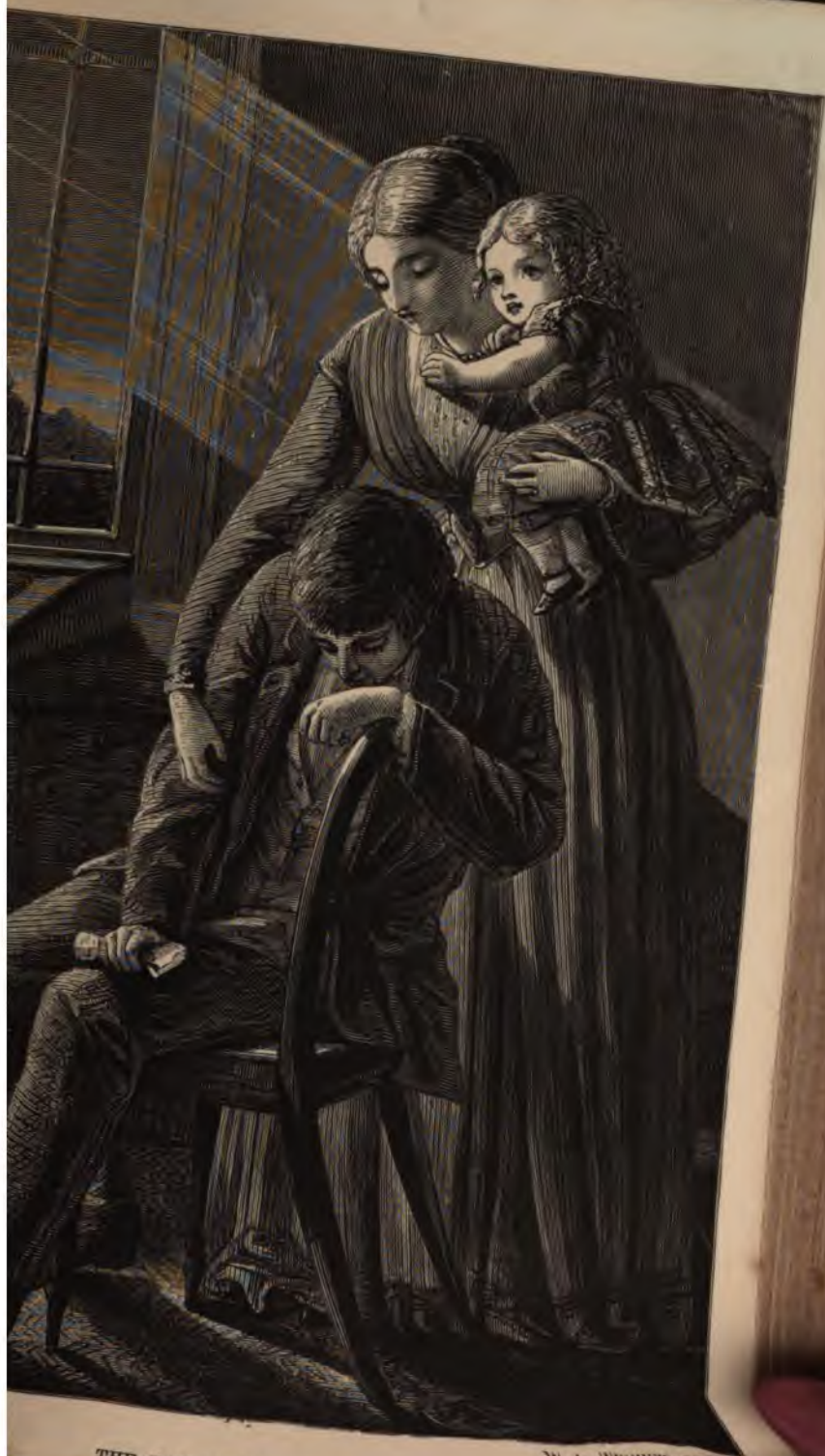
A Christmas Story

BY CHARLES SMITH CHELTHAM

SHE—the Queen of the Realm of a Million Delights—(how she contrived to open her pretty mouth to speak, without being instantly choked by the fumes of the blue and red fires that rolled in clouds about her, was not the least surprising part of her performance)—had duly exercised her magic power, and transformed the characters of the “Opening” into those of the Pantomime proper; and the “enraptured audience”—to quote the official, and of course authentic, report of the manager of the theatre—had expressed its feelings in the manner technically known as “bringing the house down.”

But the noisiest streams are not the deepest. Two persons there were in the stalls who did not applaud at all; yet it was hardly possible that anybody present on the occasion could have been more interested spectators than one of the two, at all events, a gentlemanly young man of three or four-and-twenty, who, as soon as the business of the harlequinade was begun, said something in the ear of his companion, a hearty-looking old fellow of sixty, and made his way out of the theatre. That he was thereupon held in absolute contempt by as many of the juvenile units of the audience as happened to notice his departure, followed as the natural consequence of such tasteless and eccentric behaviour. He was quite unconscious of having laid himself open to adverse criticism of any kind, however, and thought only of getting round to the stage-door in time to intercept the Queen of the Realm of a Million Delights on the way to her dwelling-place in Craven-buildings, Drury-lane.

Alas, the age is so terribly prosaic! In the old poetical times we should have sought our fays, deep in green forest glades, by singing streams, in the coral caverns of the ocean, in the silver spray of the breaking waves, in the moonshine on hill-sides, in the prism-hued vapour of the waterfall, in scenes remote of unfamiliar beauty; but *nous avons changé tout cela*; and if we are now minded to hold converse with the Fairy Queen in person, Craven-buildings is as likely a place as another to find her at home—in company, it may be, with her father, a person seedy as to outward appearance, not estimable as to manners, and as to manners, reprehensibly addicted to much smoking of co. tobacco in not at all fastidiously clean clay-pipes, to a good deal too much drinking of porter “out of the pewter;” and, generally considered, of no great account in society as it is at present organised; by profession a theatrical “super.”



THE DAY AFTER THE DERRY.

W. L. THOMAS, SC.

The Queen of the Realm of a Million Delights had for her father a rent kind of man—I ought to have said, a *very* different kind of

About once or twice a year, on the production of a new piece at the theatre at which his daughter was engaged, his name appeared prominently in the bills, as that of the inventor of "the new and elaborate machinery" employed to produce certain great stage "effects." He called himself John Henslip. His daughter was known to the public as Miss Violet Alton.

John Henslip, as I must call him for the present, was in the prime of life as to age, but he had been roughly handled by the Fates; and one night when his daughter was waited for at the stage-door by the demented young man out of the stalls, he looked middle-aged. His hair was gray, what he had of it; and his face was cut up with old lines and wrinkles. But there was nothing of the look of a broken-spirited man in him; his manner was subdued only, not a bit craven.

A cheerful fire burned in the stove, and sent a pleasant glow upwards to his face as he sat waiting his daughter's return home. Usually his daughter was her escort to and from the theatre; but he had accidentally injured one of his legs in testing the strength of a new piece of mechanism invented by himself, and was now house-bound.

He was not alone in the room, for at the moment at which I have been sent to describe him, a very comely middle-aged woman was spread the table for supper, and chatting comfortably with him.

"Leg going on quite nicely, Mr. Henslip?"

"Hope to get out upon it to-morrow, if the day's fair; and back to the theatre again before the week's out, if all goes well.—It's a fine night, isn't it, Mrs. Thompson?"

"Beautiful—moon shines almost as bright as it does in one of your plays at the theater," answered Mrs. Thompson, taking a look at the clock after turning aside an edge of the window-blind.

A small clock on the mantelpiece struck ten.

"Ten o'clock!—If they're not later than they were last night, the performance's over—the red fire's spoiling the effect of the transformation-scene—and in twelve minutes my Carry will give a strong pull at your arm, Mrs. Thompson; and then, hey for supper, with what appetite we have—and mine's as sharp-set as a thousand of needles, I give you fair warning!"

"So much the better; and I hope both of you may be able to eat a goodly bit of the rabbit I've got for you; a picture to see it was—so simple and delicate-looking."

"The onions, for the smothering process, not forgotten, I hope?"

"Real Spanish—the biggest and roundest I could pick out of a bowl—full."

"You make my eyes as well as my mouth water with greedy anticipation," he cried, with a happy laugh. Suddenly his manner changed,

and, after listening for a moment, he said, with the faintest touch of anxiety in his voice: "That wasn't my bell rung, was it, Mrs. Thompson?"

"I didn't hear it—I don't think it rung. You are not anxious about Miss Henslip coming home alone from the theater, are you?"

"No, no; not at all," he answered hastily. "If I could not trust her to come home alone, I could not trust her to go to the theatre alone. I know what you are ready to offer; but there's no need to give you that trouble. She'll be home presently all right."

"I'm sure I should never think it a trouble, if you are under any uneasiness about her."

"You're always kind and thoughtful, Mrs. Thompson. It's only that I have been so long used to having her under my own protection, that now I feel it strange not to be able to fetch her as usual. To-night, too, I'm a little nervous. It's her birth-night—and that recalls many things to my mind—some sorrows she and I have known together. But, God bless her! to-night I hope to spend—as I have spent eleven other birth-nights of my Carry's under your comfortable roof, Mrs. Thompson—in tranquil pleasure. When she comes—which won't be more than five or six minutes now—I shall expect you to drink her health in a bumper."

"That I will with all my heart!" cried Mrs. Thompson cheerily. "And there she is!—that's her ring, I know."

The worthy woman hurried from the room, which was on the first floor, and down the stairs; before she had reached the street-door, however, the bell which had summoned her was rung sharply a second time.

Henslip bent his head and listened, and his hand trembled on the arm of his chair.

"She's—she's not frightened, I hope," he said aloud. "It's a very little way from the theatre; perhaps she's only in very high spirits, it being her birth-night—"

A young, bright, innocent-looking girl, in bonnet and warm wraps, entered the room somewhat hastily.

"Nothing the matter, is there, darling?" asked her father quickly.

"No, nothing, father," she answered. "I've run all the way home --and--and—I'm a little out of breath, that's all."

She busied herself in taking off her bonnet and shawls, turning her face away, so that he could not see that it expressed the working of some unusual emotion.

"You're home three minutes earlier to-night—hurried home to be wished no end of 'happy returns,' and fill up innumerable bumpers for your old father to drink your health in—eh?"

She started, and kissed him vehemently without making any reply in words.

A moment later Mrs. Thompson, looking rather puzzled, re-entered the room.

"There's a young gentleman—asks to be allowed to see you, Mr. Henslip."

"A young gentleman? Did he not give you his name?"

"He says he is a stranger to you."

His daughter had taken his hand in hers when she kissed him; and now he felt the little hand tremble.

"Show the gentleman up," he said.

When Mrs. Thompson had left the room, he looked anxiously into his daughter's face for the explanation of the distress which she was obviously enduring.

"Something has happened, Carry. Why do you tremble so, my darling?"

"I shall be better in a few minutes, if you let me go to my own room. But kiss me first, father dear."

He kissed her fondly, and she hurried out of the room at the moment when Mrs. Thompson returned, ushering in the young man who had left his stall at the theatre for the purpose of waiting at the stage-door till the Queen of the Realm of a Million Delights emerged from that dingy portal of the Palace of Illusion.

John Henslip examined his visitor with an anxious and inquiring gaze, which was met by a frank and open look, that carried with it the assurance of honest purpose.

"I hope you will pardon me for intruding upon you at such a late hour," the visitor said.

"May I inquire to what circumstance I owe this visit?" inquired John Henslip.

"It would be a great relief to me, Mr. Alton, if I could return an answer as direct and brief as your question."

"I hope the motive of your visit is not one that needs the disguise of many words to fit it for avowal?"

"Indeed it is not, sir; but, on the contrary, one which I fear I can only avow in words too bold and abrupt."

"Let me beg you to speak at once to the point."

"In the fewest words, then,—I love your daughter, sir."

John Henslip started, and the look of inquiry which he had steadily kept upon the face of his visitor was intensified; but the young man's answering look betrayed no sign of guile.

"You love my Carry?"

"Miss Violet Alton—"

"Yes, yes; Violet Alton. Of course you have seen my daughter at the theatre—as a stage fairy, most likely. When, for the first time?"

"Upwards of two years ago; and the impression which her beauty then made upon me has grown during a long absence from England. The memory of her loveliness has been constantly with me in India, China, Australia, and America."

"And when you returned you—you—addressed yourself to my daughter?"

"I did so."

"How long since?"

"Three nights ago."

"And my daughter listened to your protestations of love for her?"

"I have not dared to hope so much. My prayer to her was that she would allow me to come to you and openly avow my passion."

"And you are now here with her consent?"

"If, in the eagerness of my own wishes, I have not wrung too flattering a meaning from the few replies I won from her this evening."

Still the young man's face bore the unshaken look of honesty that it had shown when first interrogated by John Henslip.

"Before I answer you, I'll speak with my daughter," said John Henslip, limping from the room.

He was absent for a few minutes, and then returned accompanied by his daughter.

"My love," he said, seating himself, and taking her hand, "from this gentleman I learn—don't tremble—that for two long years he has carried to distant parts of the world an impression made upon his fancy—"

"Upon his heart, sir," said the young man earnestly.

"An impression made upon his youthful heart," continued John Henslip, "by a certain Miss Violet Alton, whose supernatural charms shone out upon him from amid the dazzling lustre of a Christmas pantomime-opening, or the tinsel gorgeousness of an Easter extravaganza; and after nursing this impression so long, he is impelled to make it known to his enchanter's father, who gratefully thanks him for his frankness. Do not tremble so, my darling. In all this I find nothing to reprove; I am only fearful lest any of the false glitter and illusion of the stage should pertain to what this gentleman has imagined to be a real love-passion."

"With regard to my love for Miss Alton, I am sure—"

"Be sure of nothing, sir," interposed John Henslip—"of nothing that belongs to the stage, where all is, as it should be, unreal."

"I have never been blind or unthoughtful of this, sir; but it has no bearing on my love—my honest love—for Miss Alton."

"You must not think—I must not suffer you to think—that in such a case the good intentions by which you are actuated are conclusive arguments, or arguments at all. You are sprung from a good family probably?"

"A merchant's son, sir; and myself a merchant."

"And you want a lady for your wife: for only a lady, used to the manners of the circle into which you would introduce her, would be fit to preside over your home."

"If I were only to repeat all that others say of her—"

"You could not tell her father half so much about her as he could tell you."

"You can tell me nothing, sir, I am sure,—nothing that can by any possibility change my passion for your daughter, or abate the earnestness of my desire to win her for my wife,—if the love and devotion of my life can make me worthy in her eyes to be her husband."

John Henslip was moved—deeply and strangely, as it appeared both to his daughter and her lover—by the fervour of this declaration.

"My Carry," he said, "I am not a tyrant father to stand between you and another love, for I know that no other love can take away from me that which is the light of my life; but, for your dear sake, I must say something more to this gentleman before I can suffer your heart to be appealed to."

John Henslip was very pale, and his agitation was visibly increased, when, after a pause, during which he had held his daughter's hand pressed almost spasmodically in his own, he said,

"You know nothing of my daughter—not even her name, which you take to be Violet, when, in reality, it is Caroline."

"I do not attach any importance to that, sir, knowing, as I do, how common a practice it is on the stage."

"On the stage, yes; but"—the pallor of John Henslip's face became intensified as he went on—"but how can you know that this change of name has been adopted merely for stage purposes?—My darling, my darling!" he cried, turning to his daughter, who stood, pale and trembling, by his side; "but that this young man holds firm to what I cannot doubt is an honourable purpose, a very painful trial might have been spared both to you and to myself. He holds to his purpose, however, and honour demands that he should be made to know the sort of people with whom he is ready to cast-in his lot in life. Even you, my child, have never known—up to this moment have never, I believe, even suspected—that the name by which you have always known me to be addressed is an assumed one; that circumstances—dark circumstances in my life—forced me to suppress my own proper name, and adopt another to which I have no claim whatever."

"If this revelation is not absolutely necessary for your own comfort, sir," cried the younger man entreatingly, "I beg you not to make it."

"It is necessary, for something far dearer to me than my own comfort—for the security of my child's happiness," Henslip answered.

His daughter sank upon her knees beside him, and he sat for a while looking into her upturned tearful face with a wistful and anxious gaze. Her love and trust in him he was about to put to a terrible ordeal by the revelation he was going to make.

"Father, you do not believe, you do not think, that anything you may have to reveal can alter my love for you? Tell me you have no fear of that."

"Summon to your heart all its courage, my darling," he cried; "you will need it."

"I love you with a love that nothing can shake, father dear. That is my courage. Trust it; indeed you may."

"God bless you, my child!" he said, wiping away the tears that had sprung to his eyes. "Press your hand close in mine, as if our two hearts were thus united, and to be divided for ever should either grasp relax."

"Dear father, you feel my grasp?"

"Again, God bless you, my darling!—Remember!"

And after once more folding her to his bosom, he addressed himself to a relation of the circumstances which had compelled him for a considerable portion of his life to pass by a name that was not his own.

"Seventeen years ago," said John Henslip, "I was chief clerk in a leading merchant's counting-house, in the enjoyment of a good salary, and with a home from which no happiness that man can reasonably look for on earth was absent. Perhaps I was too blest, for I was heedless of my treasure, and failed to guard it with the care that could alone keep it to me. I indulged in no vice; but I had a weakness—I betted. No, no," he cried hastily, "do not think, either of you, that you see the drift of my story; you do not, you cannot; and the end is unknown even to me."

"Let me once more entreat you, sir, not to give yourself a needless pain," interposed the young stranger.

"It is not needless, but vitally needful," Henslip replied. "Every year, on the recurrence of the Derby Day, it had been the custom for at least one of the partners and myself to go down to Epsom to see the great race. On the morning of the day when the blight fell upon my life I was hurriedly getting ready to start for the racecourse, when the collector returned with over three hundred pounds,—one hundred and fifty in notes, and the rest in gold. I had not a moment to spare; therefore I hastily placed my initials against the amount in the clerk's book, locked the money in my desk, instead of putting it into the iron safe, and started for Epsom. The youngest of the three partners was my companion, and both he and myself were heavy losers by the race, and for the first time in my life I that day realised the squalid misery of being drunk. On reaching town, instead of going to my home, I went about from place to place—I never could remember where—with some of my companions of the day. Late at night, impelled by the tipsy idea of seeing that the money in my desk was all right, I went to the counting-house, and was admitted by the housekeeper, after she had tried in vain to dissuade me from going in. I fumbled in my pockets for my keys, but I had left them in my office-coat in the hurry of getting away in the morning; and when I succeeded in recollecting that fact, I had forgotten the purpose for which I wanted them. Without using them, I put them in my pocket and reeled home. Next

ly I was late at business, and some time passed before I had occasion to open my desk ; but the moment I did so, I saw that the gold—towards of one hundred and fifty pounds—was gone."

"You feel the pressure of my hand, father?"

"I feel it, my darling ; but listen well. In the bewilderment into which this terrible discovery threw me, I did what destroyed me—I shut down my desk ; as if, with the closing of the lid, I would have locked up for ever the secret of my loss. Hour after hour I pondered what had happened ; but when the time for paying in monies to the bank had come, I was still unresolved as to what I should, or even to what I could, do. At that moment the senior partner came into the counting-house and asked the amount of the previous day's collection. I told him—heaven knows in what terms—of the loss of the gold. Before a single word had passed his lips, I saw that he thought me guilty."

"Father, dear father, you do not feel my grasp relax?"

"For heaven's sake, continue your story, sir!" cried the young man.

"I have little more to tell," replied John Henslip. "The partners—two out of the three—for the youngest, who had been with me to the recourse, was attacked by brain-fever, arising from the over-excitement of the day—spared me, for the sake of my wife and little child, the ignominy of a public trial ; but they believed me to be guilty. Our mother, Carry,—your mother only knew that I was innocent. The weight of my affliction benumbed my faculties, and I could think of no practicable course as open to me—to fly to America under an assumed name, leaving my wife and child behind me until I could make a new home for them. In less than a year I was so far successful that I had written to my wife to come to me, when I received a letter telling me that she was ill, that—that—Thank God, I was in time to fold her in my arms, and to read in her last look that she knew I was innocent."

"All this took place seventeen years ago, sir?" demanded the young man, pale with excitement.

"Seventeen years ago."

"One question more, sir. Is your name Fleming?"

"It is. But how came you to know it?"

"O, sir," cried the young man, deeply moved, "I have now a painful duty to perform. But first allow me to leave you for a few minutes, and to return with a friend—an old friend of yours, Mr. Fleming."

And without waiting to say or hear more, he hurried from the house in Craven-buildings back to the theatre, from the stalls of which he almost forcibly carried off the hearty-looking old gentleman whom he had so long deserted, and who had been wondering for the previous half-hour what had become of his companion.

When the father and daughter were left alone, both gave way to their pent-up feelings, and for some minutes neither of them spoke.

"Your birth-night has been strangely kept, my Carry," he said at length. "You love me, my child?"

"Love you, father!" she cried; "O, yes!—and if I had not always loved you with my whole heart, I should love you more than ever, now that I know how great is your need of love to sustain you under the heavy trial of your life."

"You know, as your mother in heaven knows, that your father was innocent of the crime by the shadow of which our lives have been darkened? It costs your faith no effort to believe—?"

"Dear father, do not torture your poor heart with such dreadful thoughts."

"Heaven bless you, my darling! I kept the secret from you till you were a woman, Carry—with something of a woman's experiences, and all a woman's strength of mind and heart to aid you to bear the burden. I kept it from you almost too long; but I acted for the best."

"And it was for the best, father."

"But there is a new mystery closing round us, my love."

The conscious blood reddened the young girl's cheeks as she replied:

"Yes, father."

"This young gentleman has also some revelation to make. Do not droop, my love. A little suffering bravely borne now—for I am conscious that he has won your heart—may save you from long years of misery. Be prepared, my own one, for whatever may be the result of his communication—whether it be a great joy or a great disappointment."

The room-door opened, and the young man of whom he had just spoken entered, introducing his companion of the theatre.

"Mr. Fleming," he cried, "I have brought an old—a very old friend to see you."

"Mr. Sterling!" exclaimed John Fleming, starting to his feet, but instantly falling back into his chair and trembling violently. "Mr. Sterling!"

"Fleming—my dear fellow—give me your hand; this is indeed a delightful discovery!" cried the old fellow, with irresistible heartiness.

"Mr. Sterling!" again ejaculated John Fleming.

"Yes,—old Sterling, of Mincing-lane—Sterling, Wright, and Hartwell then—Sterling and Hartwell now."

"Then!—now!" exclaimed Fleming, like one speaking in his sleep.

"Give me your hand, Fleming,—and while I grasp it, believe me, I heartily thank heaven for the happiness of this moment—so long waited for, that I had come to despair of it."

John Fleming was too much overcome to speak.

"~~Love~~—with me, my darling,—join Walter yonder by the win-

dow for a few moments," said Mr. Sterling to Carry, who tearfully obeyed him. Then he leant over John Fleming and said, "Come, come, my old friend, look up; the time is past, thank heaven! for your head to be bowed low. Look up, I say,—and be happier than you have been for many, many years!"

"Has the—has the thief been found?"

"Speak lower—speak lower," whispered Mr. Sterling, looking anxiously towards his friend, whom he had called Walter. "The secret of the disappearance of that money from your desk was brought to light four years ago."

John Fleming threw himself upon his knees and fervently cried,

"Thank God!—thank God!"

"Amen with all my heart!" said Mr. Sterling, still turning an anxious look towards Walter. "We have sought you high and low during these four years—Walter in India, China, America, and Australia; but your unfortunate change of name defeated all our endeavours. All's well now, however; and what we've got to do is to try and forget the past as quickly as we can. You must come back to us—but not into the old counting-house, if you please—that has been swept clean away in the tide of City improvements, and we've got a palace of a place for you to come to. Don't interrupt me—I'm an arrogant, overbearing old fellow now, and won't be interrupted in the flow of my oration, even by you! It was always a settled thing between me and old Wright that you were to come into the firm; well, now it's an equally settled thing between me and Walter—his father's been dead these fourteen years—that you must come in and make up the old number of three partners. Say the word; and in six days from this we'll have the signature at the Bank of England changed from Sterling and Hartwell, to Sterling, Hartwell, and Fleming—and deucedly well it 'll look on a cheque, I can tell you! Is it a bargain? Do you close hands on it?"

Mr. Sterling held out his hand, and John Fleming, smiling through his tears, was about to grasp it, when Walter stayed him by a deprecatory gesture.

"Before you consent to link your name with mine, Mr. Fleming," he said, his voice slightly trembling as he spoke, "there is something which must be made known to you. My dear friend and guardian here would have spared me the pain of making a terrible avowal; but my duty is imperative, and I will not shrink from it. Mr. Sterling has told you that four years ago a discovery was made; it was, that the person who abstracted the money from your desk did it under the excitement of a tipsy wrangle about the settlement of a lost bet, and with the determination of replacing the sum before you could reach the counting-house on the following morning."

"Good heavens!—and that person was—was—"

"*Yes, sir,*" replied Walter with bowed head and broken voice, "my

unhappy father—your companion of the race-course—who, burdened with this dreadful secret, which he had not strength of soul to divulge, went to his grave within three years, leaving in the hands of my guardian, Mr. Sterling, a sealed packet, to be given to me when I came of age. That packet contained a full confession of all the circumstances of the—of the—crime he had committed, accompanied by an exhortation to me never to swerve by a hair's-breadth from the straight path in life."

For a few moments there was nothing more said. Walter Hartwell turned away his face to hide the tears which, in spite of his manly resolve to do his duty bravely and to the utmost, had sprung to his eyes and trembled in his voice; Mr. Sterling anxiously watched the effect produced upon John Fleming by Walter's revelation; the father and daughter were locked in each other's arms, under the influence of emotions too great and tender to find vent in words.

Mr. Sterling at length broke the silence.

"My old friend," he said, addressing John Fleming, "I own that Walter has gone beyond what I hoped would have sufficed to blow away the cloud that has so long darkened your life; but I'm not sorry that he has done what he has done, since it leaves us nothing to conceal from you in carrying out the work of reparation on which both he and I have set our hearts. If your trials have not thoroughly changed your nature, John Fleming, I know you are not the man to punish the innocent child for the guilty act of its father. A childless old bachelor myself, I have had Walter under my eyes from his early boyhood; and I can say of him with all my heart, that if I had a son, I couldn't make a better prayer to heaven than to grant that he might in all things resemble Walter Hartwell. He loves your daughter—has loved her long and honestly; it is for you, John Fleming, to say whether he shall love her hopelessly."

Thus appealed to, John Fleming looked into his daughter's face. What he read there, it is, perhaps, needless to tell: whatever it was, it induced him to kiss her fondly before placing her hand in that of Walter Hartwell.

"All the dark past is buried with the mortal dust," he said. "I give you my child's happiness in trust, Walter Hartwell. Love her well, for she has been used to be very dearly loved."

"I will have but one object in life,—to make her happy!" cried Walter fervently.

"You may trust him, Fleming; his word's as good as his bond any day!" cried Mr. Sterling, wringing John Fleming's hand joyously; "and he isn't such a goose as not to know how to make the most of the luck that has given him—all to himself, to turn his home into an enchanted palace and his life into a fairy tale—the Queen of the Realm of a Million Delights."



TWO CHRISTMAS EVES

The First

On the side of a hill, with a wide expanse of heathery moor between it and the sea, and with a wild waste of moorland all round it, stands the village of Longhill Moorside.

On the outskirts of the village, facing seaward across the moor, here is a large rambling old house, with many gables, many queer groups of chimneys, and fantastically-shaped windows, all grown gray and hoary with age; behind it, and on either side, there are groups of tall trees throwing their shadows over the roof and the green lawns below: but in front there is nothing to intercept the view—nothing to be seen save a mile or two of undulating moorland, and the glistening sea-line beyond.

Generally there is a lonely desolate look about the old house; but on a certain Christmas Eve three years ago, memorable to everybody in Longhill Moorside, it seemed to have put on a new aspect; for every room had its tenant, and bright ruddy fires glowed in every grate. Laurence Hesketh, its master, was always wont to be hospitable, and at that particular Christmas time was more so than ever; for it was the first time he was to spend as a bachelor. In the very next week Kitty Brooke, the rector's only daughter, with her pretty gentle face and winning ways, was to be made Mrs. Laurence Hesketh; and Laurence had filled his old moorland house with a party of his school and college friends, that they might be present at his wedding.

He was a good amiable man, one whom the rector and his wife were well pleased to welcome as a son-in-law; and people who put faith in the wisdom of contrasts said that he and Kitty were exactly suited to each other, for each possessed what the other needed. She was full of life and animation and high spirits, and he was studious and dreamy—meek and gentle; rather too meek and yielding for a man perhaps; but Kitty overlooked all his failings, for she knew that he loved her deeply—almost worshipped her, in fact—and she returned his affection in her own warm-hearted impulsive way.

It was a merry breakfast-party which sat round the long table in Laurence Hesketh's low-browed dining-room on the morning of that ill-fated Christmas Eve. There was Harry Foster of the Guards—a tall broad young man with fair hair, and an honest fresh-coloured face—merry and cheerful, and good-natured; there were two Mr. Hopwoods—brothers, and London solicitors, both young men, and both, as *Londoners are wont to be*, of everything they see in the coun-

try; John Mowbray—a kindred spirit to Laurence Hesketh—dreamy, meditative, and wrapped up in his books; Charles Hesketh, a cousin of Laurence's and under-graduate of St. Cyprian's, Oxford; and last—though not least in his own opinion—a young man of good family and fortune, but of few wits; most people liked him in spite of his failing—that was, at least, when he did not carry his pet practical jokes too far—and he was invited here and there and everywhere. “When people want a clown, they send for Percy Dashwood,” said his friends; and there was some truth in the remark; he was very merry and funny, and though his sallies did not always savour of the ripest wisdom, they had the merit of making his hearers laugh.

Most of Laurence's friends were keen sportsmen, and were looking forward to a long day on the moors; and moreover there was to be a Christmas party, with dancing in the evening—Kitty Brooke and her family to be present—and, of course, they were rallying their host upon the devotion he would have to pay, and also upon the approaching termination of his bachelor days: most of them too, having only arrived the night before, were strangers to the bride elect, and plied Laurence with questions. Only one among them had seen her, and that was Mr. Harry Foster; he had known the family in former years, when Kitty's father was a London clergyman; and in the early days of Laurence's engagement Harry's friends had been wont to tease him by calling him a disappointed lover, and by asking him how he had allowed the book-worm to be his successful rival, for they thought he would have liked Kitty himself. But all that was long ago, and nobody ever said anything about it to Harry Foster now.

“What shall you do with yourself, Hesketh?” inquired one of the party, as breakfast was drawing to a close—“of course we don't expect a man in your position to take any interest in such prosaic things as dogs and guns; I suppose you'll spend the morning at the rectory, holding Miss Kitty's skeins of silk.”

“O, by the bye, you were to ride with her, weren't you, Hesketh?” interposed Harry Foster; “but it seems to me you would be much better sitting over the fire, and drinking Mrs. Ruler's gruel, unless you want to be as hoarse as a raven to-night; our ride yesterday did not improve your cold.”

“I don't feel much inclined to ride to-day certainly,” remarked Laurence; “but I'm afraid that Kitty—”

“Let me go instead,” interrupted Harry Foster once more. “I haven't the vanity to suppose that I shall do as well as you, Hesketh, but I'll try my best, that is, at least, if you are not afraid to trust us. Suppose Miss Kitty and I should take it into our heads to elope; we might give you a fine chase over these hills, and for all you know there may be a boat moored somewhere along the beach in readiness for flight!”

“Upon my word, a good joke,” drawled out Percy Dashwood. “Can

you trust him, Hesketh, after his betraying such an intimate knowledge of the ins and outs of such matters?"

But Laurence only smiled—a smile of perfect confidence in his friend, and loving confidence in his promised bride; and he rang the bell, and ordered that two horses should be brought round directly after luncheon, and that a groom should be in readiness to lead the one intended for Miss Brooke to the rectory.

It was a fair, still, winter's day, with a soft clouded sky, as the two horses stood on the gravel in front of the house. They were pretty creatures; the one destined for Kitty Brooke was a bright chestnut with arched neck and slender legs, and Harry Foster's was a dappled gray.

"Dinner at six, I think you said, Hesketh," remarked Harry, as he jumped into his saddle. His host had come out to the hall-door to see the horses start.

"Yes; but don't keep her out too late; I think it will be foggy, and it is very cold." Then Laurence came out, and stroked the chestnut's nose.

"Carry her safely, Bessie," he said playfully—"she's a precious burden, isn't she?" and the petted mare, accustomed to Kitty Brooke's gentle fondling, arched her neck and bent her head as if she understood.

Laurence stood at the door, and watched the two horses till they were out of sight; and then he went into the house, lonely and dull now, for the rest of his friends were ranging the moors with their dogs and guns. By and by, as the afternoon wore on, they dropped in one by one, each full of some wonderful exploit; and gathered round their host's study fire, talking pleasant sociable talk, as the light of day grew fainter and fainter.

"It's well for you that you didn't go out riding, Hesketh," remarked one; "the cold would have been perfectly awful; even walking hard, as we did, we could scarcely keep it out; it was getting foggy too."

"Look at it now," remarked another. "Cut your way through it with a penknife. The aspect of things out of doors enhances the value of your fireside, Hesketh."

"Is it foggy? I had not noticed it. Dear me! it is indeed," said the host anxiously, his eyes turning hastily towards the window; and he rose from his chair and looked out. Kitty Brooke was exposed to the weather, whatever it might be, and he knew how swiftly and suddenly those mountain fogs come down on belated travellers. But there could be no fear for her, he told himself; she knew every inch of the wild moors, and had ridden over them and walked over them in all kinds of weather. Yet, in spite of himself, he was uneasy, and put up the window.

"They ought to be coming by this time," he said.

But there was nothing to be seen or heard of them—there was nothing to be seen save a dense curtain of thick fog, which grew lighter

for a moment and then darker again; and nothing to be heard except a low sighing wind, which seemed to promise that the mist would be dispelled after a while; and the sullen roar of the sea as it broke upon the rocks a mile away.

"Foster said he should elope, you know, Hesketh," remarked Percy Dashwood as Laurence closed the window. "He has, you may depend upon it. Wouldn't it have been better, now, if you had taken my warning?"

But Laurence took no notice of the joke, for he was not in a joking mood; and he went out of the room and closed the door behind him.

He went up to his own bedroom, which commanded a more extensive view of the moors, and leant anxiously out; but there was nothing, as before—nothing save the heavy mist and the cold spray coming up from the sea. It was growing dusk now, and very soon it would be quite dark; for the stable-clock struck five as Laurence Hesketh stood there listening. Suddenly a thought struck him: it was not likely that Kitty would be out riding in the dusk; of course they were safe at the Rectory, and Mr. and Mrs. Brooke had persuaded Harry Foster to stay to dinner. Of course, too, if nothing had been heard of them, Mrs. Brooke, being a very anxious mother, as Laurence well knew, would have sent over to hear if he had tidings of them.

So he quieted his mind in a measure, and sat down to read till it was time for dinner. But every now and then during the dinner, when the dining-room door opened, his eyes would turn anxiously towards it, and two or three times he told the servants not to forget to let him know the moment Mr. Foster arrived. He could not be long now, Laurence thought; for it was nearly seven, and the guests were to arrive at eight. He had fixed an early hour, knowing that fashionable habits would be inconvenient in that wild moorland district.

Seven o'clock struck; and Laurence and his friends rose from the table, the host going the round of his rooms to see that everything was in proper order. There was the large drawing-room, with its bare floor all ready for dancing, its walls decorated with holly, ivy, and mistletoe, and its wax lights beginning to twinkle here and there among the foliage. Then there was the library similarly decorated, its long table loaded with tea and wines and light refreshments; and there was an air of mystery already pervading the dining-room, where Mrs. Ruler the housekeeper was superintending the arrangements for supper.

"It only wants Kitty's hand and Kitty's taste to make it all that it should be," thought Laurence, as he finished his survey.

It was nearly eight o'clock then; and just at that moment the hall-door bell rang, and the master paused and listened, while the servant went to the door and opened it. But it was not Harry Foster. The sound of carriage-wheels grinding the gravel came in with the rush of cold air, and Laurence heard ladies' voices. By and by there were ex-

amations from the servants. "What's this?—what *can* it be?" Then, in hushed horror-stricken tones, the single word "Bessie!" Then Laurence heard his own name; something was to be given to Mr. Hesketh directly; and he rushed forward, heeding nothing, and taking no notice of the group of guests who had clustered inside the porch. Standing behind the carriage, nobody holding her, and her reins hanging loosely about her neck, was the mare Bessie, her nostrils extended, and her breath coming hard.

"Who brought Bessie home?" broke from Laurence Hesketh's white lips.

"Nobody brought her, sir; she followed us in," said his friend's coachman, and at the same moment his own servant put a note into his hand.

"From Mrs. Brooke, sir."

Back to the well-lighted hall Laurence rushed; and as he stopped underneath a lamp to tear open the envelope, another servant came from the interior of the house and put a second note into his hand. Laurence clutched at it eagerly, without asking whence it came. Any thing from the outer world was welcome, for it might bring him tidings of the wanderers. Hurriedly, and with feverish hands, he unfolded the notes—Mrs. Brooke's first.

"Long-hill Rectory.

"As a last hope, dearest Mr. Hesketh, I write to you. Have you heard any thing of our darling Kitty since she left us at three o'clock to ride with your friend Mr. Foster? When it began to grow dark we sent the servants after them; but they could hear nothing of them, nor find a single trace of them on the road they intended to take. I should have written before, but was loth to give you what might prove to be unnecessary alarm. Do send to me at once.—Your distressed friend,

LAURA BROOKE."

Pale, trembling, and in an agony of fear, Laurence allowed the note to drop from his hand, and took up the other. It was no wonder that he grew paler and trembled more as he read:

"DEAR HESKETH,—My light words this morning had more meaning than I led you to suppose; in short, they had a foundation in fact. There is a boat moored under the cliffs at a certain point. You will have a chase after us over the hills, but you will never see Kitty Brooke or me again. I have abused your hospitality and friendship awfully, I know; but I cannot help it. I shall leave this on my dressing-table. You will find it soon enough. H. F."

Laurence could hardly stand by the time he had finished the letter. Kitty Brooke false to him! The thought maddened him, and his brain reeled. He knew nothing more; he did not hear the ring of the bell which announced fresh visitors, did not notice the party of ladies in their bright-coloured dresses as they came into the hall. One of

then, seeing the master of the house leaning against a doorway, went to speak to him, but his eyes looked at her vacantly. The shock had robbed him of his senses, and before they could take him away, he fell heavily on the floor.

There was no Christmas party in the old house that night.

The Second

ANOTHER Christmas Eve had come round; not like the last, foggy and dreary, but bright and sparkling, with snow of dazzling whiteness lying on the ground, and clear blue skies smiling down upon it.

Just a year had rolled away since the riderless horse had appeared at the door of Laurence Hesketh's old house on that ill-fated night when his terrible affliction befel him. The shock to his nerves was followed by a violent illness, which laid him low for weeks; and when it had passed away, it was found that his reason was gone too—not hopelessly, the doctor said, but it would take time to bring him round. He was very quiet and very harmless, poor fellow! moped in the darkest corners of his rooms all day, or sat at the table, turning over his books with a piteous look in his eyes, which seemed to say that he would love them still if he could, but now they were of no use to him. He spoke but little, appearing to shrink from contact with those around him; but time after time—many times in every day—they heard him whispering to himself, "I forgive. Yes, both of them. Take care of her."

Whatever was left of his mind was evidently perpetually dwelling on the events of that Christmas Eve.

Everything that his friends could think of was tried to restore him, but all in vain. Weeks went by, and still there was no promise of amendment; he was not even able to recognise his friends; one person seemed the same to him as another. At last the doctors recommended foreign travel under proper care; change of scene might do a great deal for him, they said.

So he had spent the intervening months on the Continent, wandering from city to city; and meanwhile the letters of those who were with him had contained sad tidings. The wanderings produced no change in him, said each letter; he was just the same as when he left England. Hence, on that bright Christmas Eve they were going to bring him home—hopeless as far as his reason was concerned—quite hopeless that it would ever return.

His aged mother and one of his sisters had come down to his old house to be ready to receive him, and to make the well-known room look comfortable; for, said the doctors, the coming home may have the same effect which we hoped for from the continental tour.

A bright fire was burning in the grate, and a comfortable meal set out in the dining-room full an hour before the carriage conveying Laurence Hesketh could possibly arrive. The dusk of the coming evening

was creeping over the moors, as it appeared in the distance on the brow of a hill, and in five minutes more it was coming through the village.

A wonderful change had come over Laurence during his homeward journey. On his last day in Rome he had seemed better, and every mile both by sea and land had been marked by a decided improvement. When he set foot on English ground, it was no longer as a man who required watching and care, but simply as one who had come through a fearful time of trouble, which had crushed him, and left him melancholy for life; at least he thought so.

As the carriage bore him through the village, he was sitting in one corner of it, his hands clasped tightly together, and his lips pale and compressed. Old associations had brought his troubles vividly before him, and he was striving to bear them in a spirit of meek resignation, as a Christian man should, and to get his heart full of peace and goodwill towards men, in accordance with the holy Christmas-tide—goodwill even to Harry Foster.

There was a pause to open the gate; then the familiar sound of wheels grinding upon gravel; and in a minute more Laurence Hesketh was getting out at his own door.

But the friend who had shared his continental travels had alighted first, and was saying in a hurried whisper to old Mrs. Hesketh,

"He is so much better, nearly well; but I have not dared to tell him, and you must be careful; the shock might—"

The old lady nodded her head.

"I understand; after tea," and then she went forward and gave Laurence such a welcome as only a mother can give. "My dear boy, can I ever be thankful enough?"

His quiet reply,

"Yes, mother; I suppose we have much to be thankful for, all of us," had a tone of sadness in it which was touching to hear. The resignation he had been striving after was not perfectly attained as yet.

When the early tea was over, and Laurence had been sitting for some time by his own fireside, telling tales of his homeward journey in his old quiet collected way, his mother suddenly rose from her chair and went out of the room. Laurence fancied that he heard whispering voices outside the door; and then in a minute or two his mother came back, and stood on the hearth-rug before him.

"Laurence," she said, speaking very quietly and gently, "would your mind seeing an old friend who is anxious to see you? Kitty is here."

A dark scowl fell over his face for a moment, and then as quickly cleared away, and he rose from his chair.

"Yes, mother, let her come. I think I've quite forgiven her. I was able to pray for her last night. Yes, let her come."

A curious smile flitted across his mother's face as she replied, speaking gently as before,

"She deserves to be forgiven, Laurence; that is, at least, if there was ever anything to forgive."

But he did not hear the last words, for just at that moment a slight little figure glided into the room and came up to him. He turned and looked at her, gravely and sadly; then he took her hands in his.

"I daresay we have both much to forgive, Kitty—I mean—" He meant her new name; but the words "Mrs. Foster" refused to come, and he hurried on—"I daresay there was much in me that you thought wrong and unreasonable. It is Christmas-time again—the time of God's special good-will to man—let us be friends. Kitty, Kitty!" the old name would come back in spite of himself, "what is the matter?"

For she had torn herself away from him, and buried her face in her hands, sobbing bitterly.

"O, Laurence, how *could* you think such things of me?" she sobbed out, as soon as she could speak; "how *could* you think I should leave you for another?"

"What does she mean?" he said, turning to his mother.

"Why, it was an accident," said his mother, speaking slowly, and watching the effect of each word upon him, "which kept them out on the moors that night. Poor Kitty was thrown from her horse and dreadfully hurt; and ever since then she has been mourning for you, Laurence. You don't know how often she came here with us after she was able to move about again, when you didn't know any of us, and how she talked to you, thinking that her voice might rouse you; but even that failed."

"But Harry Foster wrote, mother, he—"

"Harry Foster never wrote, Laurence. Both he and Kitty were cruelly wronged by a wicked practical joke perpetrated by that silly young Dashwood. He saw that you were uneasy at their absence, and *he* wrote the note, and bribed the servants to deliver it to you. Harry Foster made him confess everything; and I wish you could have seen poor Harry's grief and distress; he told me over and over again that he should never be happy any more."

For a few moments Laurence was silent, a mystified dreamy look on his face. Was this all true? could it be? or was it only a dream, after all?

Then he clasped his hands, and murmured some words of thankfulness; and then he bent tenderly over Kitty.

"I have something to be forgiven for indeed," he whispered.

"Not *forgiven*," she said hastily. "Poor Laurence, you could not help it. O, I'm so thankful you are well again."

"Let us be thankful together, Kitty," he said softly, taking her hands again.

And as the hours of that Christmas Eve wore on, the two, who had been separated for so long, were almost ready to believe that the past year, with all its sorrow and trouble, had never been.

"What about the accident?" asked Laurence, just before Kitty rent away.

It was a painful story which she had to tell him, but she made as little of it as she could. She and Harry Foster had changed their minds as to the route they had intended to take over the moors that Christmas afternoon, and in coming home had lost their way, finding themselves, when they expected to be at Longhill, in the midst of a wide open space with not even a single undulation to guide them; the mist closing in on all sides, and the village and every other distant landmark completely blotted out. Kitty had represented herself as a competent guide; but here she was obliged to confess herself foiled, for she had not the slightest idea where they were. They held a hurried consultation, trying to find out by the sound of the sea in what direction Longhill lay; and when they had made up their minds, Harry Foster, in desperation, suggested that they should ride as hard as they could, striking the road as they found it; for the darkness was falling fast, and he remembered Laurence's caution against keeping Kitty out too late. Kitty, being a bold and skilful rider, agreed to the proposal, and they started at a headlong pace—a veritable race with the growing darkness. They had not proceeded far, however, before the chestnut made a fearful stumble, throwing Kitty from her seat; but her foot caught in the stirrup, and the mare dragged her for several yards. Harry Foster sprang off his horse to her assistance, but before he could reach her she had freed herself, and was lying helpless on the heather, her arm broken and her shoulder dislocated, and watching Bessie as she scampered off towards home.

That was all Kitty could relate from memory, for she fainted away from the pain as she lay on the heather, and for the rest of the night she was unconscious; but they had told her how kindly and tenderly Harry Foster behaved; how he carried her down to the village, his arm running through the rein of his horse the while; and how he rode off—red and spent as he was—in hot haste for the doctor; and all this Kitty told to Laurence. "I suppose I was very ill," she concluded; at any rate, it seemed a very long time before I was able to come and see you."

"Thank God it was no worse, Kitty," he said fervently.

The Christmas bells rang their joyous peals that night, as Christmas Eve grew into Christmas Day; and a few months afterwards there were joyous peals from the old church-tower again, to celebrate Laurence Hesketh's wedding with Kitty Brooke; Harry Foster giving the bride away.

And a week after the wedding came a subdued penitent letter from Percy Dashwood, who declared himself thoroughly cured of the vicious folly of the practical joker.

LOST SIGHT OF

A Tale of Corsica

BY ASTLEY H. BALDWIN

IN TWO PARTS:—PART II.

CHAPTER IV. ON THE SCENT

AFTER her guests had departed, Madame Dufour sat awhile in a sort of listless stupor, so apathetic as to be very much akin to absolute insensibility; but she was shortly aroused by the return of her daughter and M. Leroux. Celeste had dutifully taken upon herself the task of giving directions for the postponement of the preparations which were in progress for the wedding, in order to save her mother that trouble; and, having done so, she at once returned to her, well knowing that underneath her apparent composure Madame Dufour bore a heavy heart; for she was passionately attached to her children, whose welfare and prosperity were her one object in life.

"Mamma," said Celeste tenderly, "after all, we may be frightening ourselves needlessly; for if Adolphe should have fallen into bad hands, he may be merely detained for the sake of a ransom, and we would cheerfully pay that for his restoration."

"But, my child, you forget that he had a large sum—your dowry—with him. If they could have had that, why should they not let him go?"

"Then, mamma, why should you fear? He would have to walk if they took his horse, and in that case he may have separated from his guide and lost his way. He may be here in the morning."

"So he may, Celeste; but I fear—"

"Well, Mamma?"

"I fear," said Madame Dufour, "that your brother is too brave a man to have yielded the money without a struggle, and that in that struggle—" her voice faltered.

"He sets so little value on money, mamma."

"Celeste," replied Madame Dufour, almost angrily, "do you not see that your brother was holding *your* money—holding it in trust for you? He would die rather than betray a trust—"

"O, forgive me, mamma; I understand."

"But, dear Celeste, dear Madame Dufour," gently interrupted Leroux, "this does not help us. What is to be done? That is the point."

He then proceeded to advise that, in the morning, himself and the



four Corsicans (who were to remain at the villa for the night) should go to the Ronge-gorge, ascertain if the landlord had returned, and cross-examine him; while a second party of Madame Dufour's servants should scour the country round, making inquiries in every direction. It was decided also that bills should be printed, offering a reward for the discovery of Adolphe, dead or alive.

This seemed to Madame Dufour sensible advice, and she promptly determined to act upon it.

"I am not altogether easy about Coletti," she added. "It appears strange to me that he should have been absent when M. Previn was about to leave his auberge."

"Be sure I will cross-examine him well, dear mother."

"Ah, you call me 'mother.' That is right; let us act heart with heart, and hand with hand, my son," she said solemnly; and she extended her hand to Leroux, who grasped it affectionately.

"What if Coletti should not have returned?" said Celeste.

"Ah, that would indeed look suspicious," replied her betrothed. "But at least there is his wife, who appears, by M. Previn's account, to be easily influenced."

"Yes," said Madame Dufour; "depend upon it, our best hope will be in that woman. She appears to have suspicions herself. She has no doubt been deceived by her husband."

"But what motive, mamma, could Coletti have for detaining or injuring Adolphe?"

"The most powerful of all motives for a man of his class—he may have known of that money."

"O, surely he would not rob the son of an old benefactress!"

"You heard M. Previn say that he was not aware that it was our Adolphe?" answered the terror-stricken mother.

"Ah, so he did! But he would not hurt him?"

"Who knows, my child? Coletti thought small robberies scarcely a crime. None of these lower sort of Italians do. He may have planned a greater one. These unknown travellers (unknown to him) offered a good opportunity, since one was crippled, and the other had charge of the property. Your brother would not give up his trust with life. There may have been a struggle, and then—ah, then—" she sighed heavily. "My mind misgives me."

"Dear mother, let us trust that, by God's mercy, our dear one may be safe."

"Yes, yes," said Leroux; "and now, Celeste, and you too, mother, endeavour to rest. If you cannot sleep, at least lie down. It is now two, and at five I will be off with these worthy Corsicans to the hostelry."

"Are they trustworthy, do you think?"

"O yes; I will answer for them."

And he was right; for the four young peasants happened, by good

luck, to be worthy and intelligent men in the main, superior indeed to the generality of their order.

Celeste and her mother yielded to these affectionate pleadings, and each retired to her apartment.

Leroux meanwhile ordered all the lights to be extinguished; and, withdrawing to his own bedchamber, exchanged his ball-room suit for one fitted for the work before him. Then he threw himself, dressed as he was, upon his couch, and snatched a few hours' slumber.

At about half-past four he awoke, and immediately proceeded to collect the Corsicans, who, stimulated by the prospect of a large reward, were not only ready but eager to begin the search. Besides, the game was an exciting one, and Corsicans delight in anything that promises adventure.

Up and down the mountain paths, across dried-up swamps and springs went the five with all speed possible; but it was ten o'clock, and the sun was high in the heavens before the party arrived in sight of the hostelry of the Rouge-gorge.

Leroux and his men halted before the low door, and the former, being unacquainted with Coletti or his wife, desired one of the Corsicans—Ferdinando—to commence the parley. This he did by knocking briskly on the door.

"Come, Signor Coletti, open to your customers, man!"

"He may not have returned," suggested Leroux; "call madame."

Ferdinando continued his knocking, but there was no reply.

"If it please you, signor," he said at length, "I will go round the back way. It is likely Annetta may have some house-work in hand."

"Do so," replied Leroux; and the Corsican made the circuit of the house, leaving the other four waiting at the front doorway.

Five minutes passed—*ten* minutes!

Leroux was in an agony of suspense. Was there a trap here? At last the Corsican returned, very pale, and with astonishment depicted on his face.

"Signor, there is no one within. I have entered every room in the house."

Leroux appeared confounded. All the chief actors in this remarkable drama of real life had disappeared as if by magic. Dufour, Caravari, Coletti, and his wife, had vanished as completely as if they had melted into thin air.

"My men, will you help me with all your hearts to solve this mystery?" he said at length.

"Si, signor."

"Break-in the door, then." And the wood-work speedily gave way beneath the united efforts of the five men.

Leroux advanced cautiously into the little kitchen. It was undisturbed. Not so much as a kettle or a pan had been used that day. It was evident the flight had been a thing of the night before.

But where was Dufour? Had he been kidnapped, robbed, and murdered? or was he held prisoner for the sake of ransom? That was the question.

Leroux searched every room minutely, mystified beyond measure by the non-appearance of Madame Coletti. Was she an accomplice, or had she also been silenced? Suddenly it occurred to him that her husband might have returned and fetched her. Occupied with these and a thousand other thoughts, he came to the room which had been occupied by Dufour, as it happened. There was nothing here to excite any suspicion. But as Leroux was going out, his foot struck against a hard substance on the floor, and he stooped to pick it up.

It was a Spanish gold double doubloon! Leroux secured the coin; but it gave him no clue. He knew that the missing man had with him part of his sister's dowry in doubloons, and he thought that it was just possible Adolphe might have accidentally dropped one in this chamber, which was perhaps the one he had slept in. And yet what reason could the traveller have had for opening the valise which contained the money? Was it not more probable that Dufour had been robbed, and that the piece of money had been dropped in the struggle? Yet if he had been robbed, had he also been murdered? There was not the least appearance of resistance, no blood—nothing disarranged. Standing on the threshold meditating this horrible mystery, Dufour slightly moved the door-mat with his restless foot. As he did so, a piece of dirty paper caught his eye. He stooped, and seized it eagerly. These two words were written on it, in a woman's hand, "Follow: Naples."

Leroux remembered that Coletti and his half-brother were Neapolitans, and immediately understood that the wife of the former had written this note. But with what motive? She could not, it was evident, be an accomplice—or at least a willing one; but then, would she betray her husband? Was this another snare?

At length he came to the conclusion that his first step was to return to Ajaccio, and acquaint Madame Dufour with the result of this search. It was plain nothing could be done until then.

Leroux collected the Corsicans, and asked them if they would be willing to accompany him back to Ajaccio, and possibly from thence to Naples.

All gave a willing assent.

"Thanks, good fellows," he said; and as an earnest of future reward he gave each of them two or three pieces of gold. This was the finishing stroke. All four were now clamorous with gratitude, and willing to follow him to the uttermost ends of the earth.

M. Leroux considered himself perfectly justified under the circumstances in availing himself of all the provisions he found ready to his hand in the larder of this ominous hostelry, and accordingly in a few moments he and his little band sat down to an excellent repast.

The leader was too much oppressed with sad forebodings to care about eating ; but his satellites did not fail to make an exceedingly hearty meal. This over, and the horses refreshed, they at once returned to Ajaccio.

When Leroux reached the château in the evening he found Madame Dufour and her daughter in one of the saloons, with Jules Previn, who was stretched upon a couch. A light repast of coffee, chocolate, fruits, &c. was on the table, but it had scarcely been touched.

As Leroux, hot, jaded, and anxious, entered the apartment, booted and spurred as he was, Madame Dufour and Celeste rose simultaneously, whilst even the invalid made a motion as if he too would fain have risen. Leroux advanced uneasily towards Madame Dufour. "Alas," he said, "mother, the mystery only grows darker." Then he detailed the results of his journey.

Madame Dufour and her daughter could not restrain their tears, while Previn sobbed aloud.

For a few moments there was silence, broken only by that most terrible of all sounds, the outburst of a man's uncontrollable sorrow. At last Leroux said,

"I shall depart for Naples to-morrow."

Madame Dufour could not reply, but silently wrung his hand.

That silent handclasp was for him an all-sufficient reward.

"But," said Celeste, who was the calmest of the party, "this Madame Coletti's conduct seems inexplicable. Can she have determined to betray her husband?"

"We have no knowledge that she is even with him," said Madame Dufour.

"O yes," interrupted Leroux; "the scrap of paper proves that."

"Ah, I suppose so!"

"Can they have taken Adolphe with them?" inquired Celeste.

"It is barely possible," said her lover, "for he would give the alarm on the road, or at any rate when they reach Naples."

"Where, then, is he, do you think?"

Leroux was silent.

"Speak!" said Madame Dufour. "Do you fear the worst?"

"I do. If Adolphe has been robbed, he has been—"

Madame Dufour could scarcely suppress a cry; but she subdued her emotion with the courage of a Spartan mother, and said in a voice which only slightly trembled:

"Murdered, you mean!"

"Alas, yes!" faltered Leroux.

Then again a dead silence reigned.

Finally it was arranged that Leroux and his four Corsican followers should set out for Naples on the following day, making inquiry on their route, as well as in Naples itself, for the fugitives; the main

object, of course, being to track Caravarri, who at least, it was evident, must be cognisant of the fate of Adolphe.

Then this second miserable day came to a close, and the heart-broken little party, with anxious presentiments, once more retired for the night.

CHAPTER V.

IN FULL CRY.

M. LEROUX, who fortunately possessed an aptitude for sleeping under the most trying circumstances, awoke at seven in the morning very greatly refreshed. This was lucky, as he had work before him of no ordinary character.

He descended to the breakfast-room, and was shortly joined by the other members of the family, too anxious to have passed so good a night as our friend Albert. M. Previn, in particular, was so pale and wan as to put his joining the voyage of discovery quite out of the question, even had his sprained foot permitted it.

The breakfast was a cheerless one; for Madame Dufour and her daughter were too cast down to endeavour to hide it, and the busy brain of Leroux was meditating the best initiatory steps to take in the search. At last Madame Dufour broke the silence:

"At what time do you depart, my son?"

"Immediately after we have finished breakfast. So we must at once say all that is to be said."

"Immediately! But you will want time to prepare your luggage."

"All that is done. I saw to that before I came down."

"And your four Corsicans?"

"O, they are quite ready, good fellows that they are."

"What is to be done at Naples, Albert?" inquired Celeste.

"Why, first we shall visit Caravarri's haunts. I have ascertained that he has a cousin who keeps an auberge on the outskirts of the city. Really they seem all innkeepers, the relations of this man."

"Well, then?"

"Then I shall find out if he has been in Naples lately, and when he was last seen."

"Surely," interposed Previn, "he will warn his friends against telling you."

"Ah, but I intend to have the help of the chief of police, who will find out all I want to know; whether Monsieur—that is to say, *Signor*—Caravarri likes it or not."

"But can he help you to make these discoveries?" said Madame Dufour.

"That remains to be seen, my dear mother; but at least we will try. There are clever police in other places besides Paris."

"Do not be rash, my son. If these bad men have injured Adolphe, they will be desperate to guard against—"

"O, we will take care about that."

"And we shall hear from you?"

"Of course. I may be months away."

"Months!"

"Certainly; if these men have been to Naples, it is not probable they have remained there, knowing as they must that there will be search made for poor Adolphe."

"What, then, do you think?"

"That they will cross into England, or Germany, or France—perhaps even to America."

"But to do that they must have passports."

"Yes; and therein lies one of the best means we have of tracking them."

"Albert, you think of everything."

"Well, some one must think. It is not child's-play, this game."

"You are a fine fellow, my son."

"Thanks, mother; I shall do my best." And he rose from the table. All immediately followed his example.

Then came the hasty and anxious leave-taking to be expected on such an occasion. But Leroux, with his usual good sense, would not prolong it, although conscious that his mission was an eminently dangerous one, and even, at the best, could scarcely terminate satisfactorily so far as Adolphe was concerned.

Descending the broad steps of the mansion, he found all his four Corsicans waiting for him. They set up a kind of half-suppressed cheer when they saw him.

"Good-morning, signor."

In a few moments they were all five on their way, Madame Dufour and her companions waving their last adieux from the windows of the house.

There is no need to describe the voyage to Naples. Nothing of importance occurred on the way; and at ten o'clock on a fine starlight night M. Leroux and his companions found their vessel in that magnificent bay which has been the theme of more praises and more songs than any other sea-view in the world.

Leroux's first care was to repair to an hotel, where he procured ample accommodation for himself and his four attendants for the night.

In the morning he went to the bureau of the chief of police, to whom he detailed the story of Adolphe's disappearance. Signor Foletti shrugged his shoulders and looked interested.

"Ah! a case of brigandage!"

"Well, not exactly. Rather of roadside murder."

"That makes no difference." And the grand official took a tremendous pinch of snuff. He was a fine-looking old fellow, with hair
—like as snow.

"Well, we will not dispute about particulars. I have reason to suppose my friend has met with foul play."

"The signor is right."

"What, you think so too?"

"Certainly."

Leroux groaned, for the decision with which Signor Foletti spoke swept away his last hope of finding Adolphe—alive at least.

Foletti mused a moment. Then he said:

"Describe to me this Caravarri."

Leroux complied.

"Now, Coletti."

Leroux did so.

"And his wife?"

"A little, golden-haired, timid woman with—"

"Ah, stay. I am mistaken if I did not see her yesterday near the market-place, with a sullen-looking man, whom she appeared terribly loth to accompany—"

"O, my dear M. Foletti!"

"Stop a bit. The husband—has he this kind of thing" (and Foletti imitated the appearance of a hunchback) "in his shoulders?"

"Yes, yes!" eagerly cried Leroux.

"Good. I think that gentleman has been wanted by our dear little government some years, on account of a slight mistake he made when— But stay; let me see."

Then Foletti opened a drawer, from which he took a printed paper. This he examined carefully.

"Ah, ah!" said he; and he read, "'Carlo Coletti, age forty-three, swarthy complexion, grizzled beard, eyes particularly bright and piercing, very broad shoulders, with a slight stoop—'"

"It is the man himself!" cried Leroux.

"Yes, indeed, I think so."

"But the mistake he made, M. Foletti; what was it?"

"O, my dear friend, a mere nothing. He had here a kind of office-shop. One day an old gentleman took a bed with this worthy Coletti. In the morning no old gentleman, no landlord, no anybody; all fled."

"But, good God! this is another edition of my story."

"Well, yes." And Foletti pronounced the words unctuously, as if a murder or two made a very pleasant diversion in the way of business.

"And, M. Foletti," said Leroux, "you actually saw, then, this wretch and his wife yesterday? Why did you not arrest them?"

"Gently, gently, mio caro; how could I tell? It is only by your description of the woman I thought of the man."

"But you say you had wanted him for years."

"Yes; but the search was long since given up. That printed description has lain in my drawer for about a dozen summers. We

have an enormous amount of business. Consider, then, how unlikely it was that my mind should revert to that affair unless some unusual occurrence recalled it."

Leroux felt the justice of this remark.

"Well, you will help me?" he said.

"With heart and soul, signor," replied the chief, who was a good and just although eccentric man.

"You did not see a third person, then, with Coletti and his wife, M. Foletti?"

"No; and I am sure there was not."

"What is to be done, M. Foletti?"

"Why, firstly, you and I will repair, with two armed servants of mine, to the auberge of this Caravarri's cousin. If he be there, we shall, through him, track the man and his wife. We will arrest Caravarri, and we shall find out something, never fear."

"But if we do not find Caravarri?"

"In that case we will try to find the worthy Coletti."

The first thing Foletti did was shrewd. He forwarded a description of Coletti and his wife to all the sub-offices of police, with orders to prevent any vessel leaving Naples without express permission. Consequently, unless Coletti had already departed, he could not escape. This done, he and Leroux, with two assistants, set out for the auberge indicated, which was on the very outskirts of the city.

It was about one when they reached the Cenerentola, which a glance showed them to be a very low sort of cabaret. Indeed, its frequenters were, if possible, even more grimy and tattered and torn than the heroine of Rossini's charming opera; and both Leroux and M. Foletti at once saw the need of extreme caution. The latter, taking Albert's arm, advanced to the bar, where a dirty but somewhat pretty handmaid of Bacchus was dispensing various glasses of poisonous compounds to the still dirtier customers.

Foletti, signing to Leroux to hold his tongue, called for four glasses of spirits. Then, whilst his party were drinking and playing their parts (they were all disguised as fishermen), he said:

"'Tis a fine day, mia bella!"

The girl brightened up, and looked pleased at the words "mia bella."

"Si, signor."

"And is trade pretty brisk?"

"Yes; we cannot complain. Uncle is doing well."

"O, that is Signor Caravarri, is it not?"

"Yes, surely."

"Ah, it is easy to be seen, so pretty a girl as you will not want for dower. By my faith, if I were a score of years younger, when I came home from next voyage, I might think about taking a wife; as it is, hang me if I will not bring you a pair of earrings to walk out with on

fête-days!" and Foletti, who played the master of a fishing-vessel to the life, and looked a perfect Masaniello in his dark wig, swore a great oath. "What is your name, mia angela?"

"Lauretta," said the girl, who was growing more and more taken with the new-comer.

"Cielo! What a lovely name! I daresay your cousin now thinks so also?"

"My cousin?"

"Yes, your cousin, the worthy guide, who now and then visits Corsica."

"Visits?"

"Yes; does he not?"

"O, no; he *lives* there. But I would have you know he is nothing to me," added she briskly, "though I daresay he will pester me with his nonsense next time he comes to see us. He is always at that, stupid fellow!"

"You have not seen him lately, then?"

"Not for a year."

"Ah, well," said Foletti, who had now learned all he desired to know, "one feels jealous to think of handsome cousins, you know."

"O, do be quiet with your rubbish, signor!" returned Lauretta, who, however, relished it extremely.

"Addio, mia bella!" said the chief of police, chucking her under the chin. "This is fine brandy, my faith, and I shall not fail to come hither to see my pretty tapster again, when I return from sea. I shall not forget the earrings. Addio!" And he and Leroux, with their two companions, quitted the cabaret.

Lauretta went to the door to see the last of them, and absolutely sent a sigh after the handsome fisherman. Then she went back quite disgusted with all her present customers, and fully resolved to hold her head high for the future.

Did she dream of the respectable Signor Foletti that night? Possibly.

"Well?" said Leroux, as they retraced their way to the chef's bureau.

"O, I am satisfied he has not been there. The girl spoke truth. He is either with Coletti and his wife, or he has quitted them to save himself."

It may be as well here, for the purposes of this tale, to state that Caravari had never quitted Corsica.

When M. Foletti and Leroux returned to the former's office, the chef offered his guests refreshments, which were at once accepted. Whilst partaking of these, Foletti displayed great social humour, and M. Leroux began to think he had never met with a more agreeable companion.

All at once there was a terrific knock at the outer door.

A servant entered: he announced "Signor Poretti, who wishes to see you immediately, M. Foletti."

"Ah," said Foletti, "a colleague of mine! Show him up."

The servant bowed, and shortly returned, ushering in a little, bustling, active man of business, who was a sub-officer of police under Foletti.

"Ah, M. Foletti, your servant, sir."

"Yours also, my good Poretti. And what, pray, brings you hither at a time when I know the signora, your wife, provides for your creature comforts?"

"Well," replied the little man, looking very important, "you sent a notice, you know, concerning two persons whom you suspected to be criminals—"

"A—h!" said Foletti, drawing his chair closer to that of his subordinate.

Leroux listened with all his ears.

"Well," repeated Poretti, "being, as you know, signor, always desirous to show my zeal—"

"Yes, yes, I know. Continue."

"Well," continued Poretti, for the third time, "I found that passports had been granted yesterday to a man and woman answering to the description of your fugitives, and also that they had taken passages in a vessel about to sail, it was thought, for Marseilles. Down I went to the quay and made inquiries. 'Did any vessel sail, or was any vessel going to sail for Marseilles or for *any* part of France?'"

"Capital! Well?"

"Well, La Belle Etoile and La Mirabelle were about to sail, the one for Marseilles, the other for Nantes; but in consequence of your orders, Signor Foletti, both were awaiting permission."

"Quite right, quite right. Proceed."

"I displayed my warrant of search, I described the persons I required, and I will do the captains the justice to say they assisted me in every way. But no fair-haired woman, no grizzly man, could I find. I took every cranny by storm, signor; not so much as a rat escaped notice."

"Good, good!"

"Well, as I was leaving the quay—having given up the search as hopeless—a ragged man touched me on the shoulder. 'The signor wants to find somebody,' he said. You may be sure I pricked up my ears at this. 'O ho,' I thought; and I put my hand into my pocket. The beggar extended his hand, saying, 'A golden key will open every door, signor.'

"I dropped into the rascal's palm a bright beautiful napoleon, full weight." (Here Poretti, who was somewhat miserly, heaved a deep sigh).

"Then the beggar whispered to me, 'A vessel sailed early yester-

day from here. Among the passengers were two persons—a dark slouching man and golden-haired woman—'Ah, ah!' cried I; 'the vessel's name?' 'The George Washington.' 'And she sailed for?' 'New York.' This was enough; I gave the beggar a napoleon, ran off at full speed, and here I am."

Poretti paused for breath; M. Foletti's face was radiant with pleasure.

"You are an ornament to the state, M. Poretti," he said, "and here is an earnest of reward;" and he gave the delighted official fifty napoleons.

Then he made arrangements for a long absence. He appointed Poretti chief for three months. He gave him briefly and hastily a few directions, wrote a few notes, and sent him to hire a vessel to sail immediately for New York. Poretti departed, thinking all this good luck a dream.

Leroux looked on passively, feeling that the matter could not be in better hands. Only once did Foletti address him.

"This will be expensive, M. Leroux."

"You have *carte blanche*."

"Very well;" and he continued his writing.

The four Corsicans were well paid, and sent home rejoicing.

As the setting sun sank behind the blue waves of the matchless Bay of Naples, a vessel sailed grandly out with her white sails bathed in a glow of gold. She was bound for New York.

Two figures stood on her deck watching the receding shore. One of them had scarcely spoken a word for hours. He had been absorbed in thought.

Suddenly he turned his face, radiant with satisfaction, towards his companion—the satisfaction of a genius who finds his plottings progress favourably.

"*Eh bien*, M. Leroux. I think we have them now."

"I think so."

CHAPTER VI.

RETRIBUTION.

THE Vendetta—for such was the name of the vessel which carried Leroux and Signor Foletti to New York, and there was something in the appellation which tickled the officer's sense of justice—made an excellent voyage; indeed, she met with but one misadventure. She lost a mast in a terrific hurricane. A jury-mast, however, brought her safely into the harbour of the famous American city.

The first business of the two friends, after due rest and refreshment, was to inquire if the George Washington had arrived.

Yes; she had come safely into port three days sooner than themselves, being a magnificent sailer.

"Ah, indeed!" said Foletti to his informer, a clerk, whose business

it was to see the ship's stores cleared and the passengers landed; "and had you amongst her passengers a stout, stooping, coarse-looking man, with singularly piercing eyes and a grizzled beard?"

"I cannot remember—I—"

"He had with him," interrupted Leroux, "a golden-haired little woman, timid to a degree—"

"Yes, yes, I remember now. O yes, there was such a man and a woman."

"Do you know what became of them?"

"No—stay; I heard the man abusing his wife. Was she his wife?"

"Yes, yes; go on."

"Ah, I thought she was his wife, because he scowled at her— Well, he said, 'Wait till I get you out at Wencheston, my catamaran. I will pay you there for this cursed folly.'"

"Wencheston! How far is it from this city?"

"About a hundred and thirty miles," said the clerk. "Lots of settlers go there. A party went yesterday."

"And you think this man and his wife went with them?"

"It is very possible."

"Thank you." Foletti gave the youth a *douceur*, and walked away arm-in-arm with Leroux.

"We will go to-night," he said.

"After Coletti?"

"Yes, we shall overtake them, I think."

"How shall we go?"

"Why, the emigrants are in wagons. There are a couple of thousand of them. If we go on horseback, we shall more easily overtake them."

They now entered the hotel at which they had temporarily put up. It was about twelve o'clock, and Foletti ordered dinner at once, as he was about, he said, to proceed on a mission of much importance. The landlord looked curious.

"Can you," said Foletti, "recommend to me two trustworthy strong fellows, who will join me and my friend in an expedition for a hundred miles or so? They shall have plenty of dollars."

"Reckon I can, stranger."

"They must be ready in an hour's time."

"Calculate they shall, stranger."

"It is a mission of some danger."

"Bar-hunting, 'praps, stranger?"

"More dangerous than that." The landlord opened his eyes.

"Well, I will trust you. It is to take a desperate criminal."

"Je-ru-sa-lem!"

"And I know the Yankees have pluck."

"I calculate you're about right there, stranger. If, for almighty fire-away pluck, they don't whip all creation, I'm—"

"Well, well, can I depend on you?"

"Reckon you can, stranger. And now I'll send in dinner."

And an excellent dinner it was, in which the most prominent dishes were white-fish, canvas-back ducks (with hominy beans), and the splendid peach-fed hams of Cincinnati. But what astonished Foletti and Leroux more than anything was the enormous variety of mixed drinks peculiar to America. Sherry-cobbler, gin-sling, mint-julep, slap-bang, brandy-cocktail, and a score of other potations were suggested by their host in succession. Both, however, ate and drank moderately.

The meal was no sooner over than the landlord informed them the horses and a wagon were ready. They were to ride; but it was necessary that a wagon should follow them with provisions, sleeping rugs, and other requisites. A strong stout young fellow was in attendance to form one of the party; and the second assistant proved to be no other than the landlord himself, who, although he had as much "bounce" as most Americans, was at bottom an honest and really courageous fellow.

The landlord, knowing well the route towards Wencheston, whither so many emigrants were daily departing, was a very excellent guide. Accordingly they took the main road; and believing that Coletti and his wife could not be more than from fifty to sixty miles ahead, they rode on steadily in order to spare their horses, whilst the wagon with the provisions followed more at leisure.

They had proceeded a dozen miles or so at a fair pace, when the idea occurred to Leroux, that it would be difficult to find the persons they were in search of amongst so numerous a body of emigrants, and he communicated his thoughts to Foletti.

"Ah, we must trust to chance for that," was the reply.

"Do you know," continued the Neapolitan chef, addressing the landlord (whose name, by the way, was Stackles), "of how many this party of emigrants consists?"

"Wal, I heerd say about fourteen hunder, childer and all, and I calculate about fifty waggins, stranger."

"O," said Foletti, turning to Leroux, "that will not be difficult. Since we could trace them in a city, we shall easily do so in a wilderness; besides, there is no escape, and the woman will readily be detected."

"Ah, yes!"

And they continued to ride on, conversing freely with Stackles, who, barring the insuperable egotism inseparable from the Yankee character, was a well-informed, pleasant fellow-traveller. As soon as evening began to close in, Foletti proposed to encamp for the night and await the arrival of their provision-cart (for it was not in reality a wagon, but a tilted carrier's cart). The proposition was hailed with acclamation, as all the party were somewhat weary.

"A bit of hung beef will be excellent," said Leroux.

"And a draught of good cider," chimed in Foletti.

"Wal, yes, and a good chaw of 'bacca," added Stackles.

"You may keep *that* to yourself, at any rate," said both his companions.

"No offence, strangers. Every crittur has its own ways, you know, and so have most nations under the sun, I reckon."

They now dismounted, and selected a smooth green hollow, underneath a clump of butter-nut trees, for the place of bivouacking. After reclining here about an hour and a half, their sight was gladdened by the view of their approaching provisions. The cart was received with a hearty cheer, and a meal of hung beef, bread, cider, and ale quickly prepared. Whilst employed in enjoying it, they discussed their prospect of coming up with the emigrants.

"They cannot be more than twenty miles ahead," said Foletti.

"No, for they must stop for the night like ourselves, I reckon," replied Stackles.

"How terrified the wretch will be!" added Leroux.

"Astonished, not terrified," quietly said Foletti.

"The rascal!"

"The vagabond!"

"The darned skunk!"

It was agreed that they should commence operations early in the morning, that they might the sooner come up with the emigrants; and after a hearty meal and a cheerful pipe all round, they retired to the cart, where, with the aid of bear-skins and rugs, they formed themselves far from despicable couches, and so, with the bright stars shining round in the deep blue of a summer night, and the silence unbroken save by the occasional cry of the hare and the note of the whip-poor-will, they were soon wrapped in deep and healthy sleep.

Day was just breaking when Stackles, who was the first to awake, aroused the other sleepers.

A hurried toilette was made, and fortunately there was water at hand for their ablutions. Then a fire was made gipsy-fashion, and a breakfast of coffee and ham quickly prepared. It was scarcely light when the horses had been put to the wagon and the saddle-horses mounted. Then the equestrians galloped on, leaving the driver of the wagon to follow at his leisure. The morning was fine, and the voice of the blue-bird was frequently heard in the maples,—now beginning to grow red. It was a morning to make the pulse bound and the blood stir in the veins, and but for their pre-occupation of spirit, both Foletti and Leroux would have enjoyed it. As for Stackles, he was as blithe as a mocking-bird. He had no reputation as a police-officer at stake, nor was he seeking to throw light on the fate of a dear friend. The occasion was to him merely that of a hunt rather more exciting than one after bears or lynxes. He whistled, he sang, he chattered; but

both his companions remained silent, only now and then arousing themselves to reply to some query from the American.

"Should like to tree that ar coon, strangers."

"He richly deserves it," said Foletti. Suddenly he started with a loud exclamation.

"What is that long blue line about four miles ahead?"

"Whar?" interrupted Stackles.

Foletti pointed towards a chain of hills in the distance, where a long blue line was winding in serpentine fashion around their base.

"'Tis the emigrants, I reckon. Darned if 'tisn't!" said the landlord.

"Apple squash and airthquakes, 'tis the emigrants!"

All spurred on their horses, greatly excited, keeping their eyes fixed upon the living mass ahead.

Suddenly the blue winding line stopped.

In a few minutes they had ridden near enough to perceive that there was some great commotion in the emigrants' camp. The hoarse roar of a great many voices was suddenly heard in the air, and people could be seen hurrying to and fro in a state of manifest excitement.

As they came nearer and yet nearer they could hear the mob frightfully excited.

"Ah, the wretch! the bloodthirsty tiger!"

"Judge Lynch, Judge Lynch!"

"Hurrah!"

"Hang him, hang him!"

"Judge Lynch, Judge Lynch!"

The ocean of voices rose to a perfect tempest of wrath, amid which Foletti and his party rode up to the emigrant wagons just in time to see the form of a man run up, hanging by the neck, to the bough of a great maple.

"Hurrah, hurrah! Judge Lynch, Judge Lynch!" screamed the infuriated mob; and as the body swayed to and fro in its ghastly struggles, the shouts were renewed till the clamour was deafening. When there was a moment's lull,

"What is all this?" said Foletti.

Then followed a torrent of excited incoherent explanations.

"Ah, the wolf!"

"Beast!"

"Murderer!"

"Poor, dear, pretty creature!"

"So young!"

"Hideous wretch!"

"So beautiful!"

"Bloodthirsty tiger!"

"O, dear! O, dear!"

Leroux, Foletti, and Stackles gently put aside the clamorous women, who were clustered round one spot near the maple-tree, and,

without more force than needful, penetrated into the midst of the group.

On the ground, her long golden hair all dabbled in blood, her beautiful features white and fixed, eyes staring and glassy, dead, stiff, and cold, lay poor Annetta, stabbed through the heart by the murderous knife of her ruffian husband. In a mad fury of drunken vengeance he had killed this helpless companion of his wanderings, and had been taken red-handed by his fellow-emigrants.

Foletti and Leroux at once comprehended the whole, and drew back with a fearful shudder.

"The miscreant!" said Leroux.

"Ah, you have paid for it, you brute!" said Foletti.

"The darned coon deserved burning!" said Stackles, in a burst of genuine indignation.

In all the group there was not a dry eye; yet it was no shame to their manhood.

Poor unhappy Annetta,—young, fair, loving,—cut off by a violent death, seemed, even in that death, to call upon Heaven to avenge her.

The chief of police, with his comrades, advanced towards the maple-tree which bore such ghastly fruit, and cut down the body.

Yes, it *was* the miscreant Coletti.

The mob was hushed into silence.

"I had orders to take this man, dead or alive," Foletti said aloud to the astonished emigrants. "You have spared me the trouble."

"Hurrah!"

"And I confess," said the honest police-officer, fairly overcome with emotion, "I do not regret it."

"Hurrah, hurrah! bravo, Mr. Foreigner!"

"I *must* have taken him, had he been alive," continued Foletti; "but as he is dead, I will not defile my fingers with such carrion. Let a grave be made for him far away from the spot where you lay his unhappy victim."

After this there was no more to be done but to go back to Italy.

CHAPTER VII.

FOUND AT LAST.

LEROUX had written to Madame Dufour before he left Naples, informing her of his projected visit to America; and he had written again from the latter country, detailing to the horror-stricken family at Ajaccio the particulars of the tragedy recorded in the last chapter. So that, when he arrived once more at Madame Dufour's mansion, all were prepared for the result of his voyage. The meeting was affectionate, but deeply sorrowful, and everyone felt that the protracted absence of Leroux had been unavailing, since, though it informed them of the death of Coletti and his wife, it threw no light upon the missing

Adolphe. Caravari had never since been heard of; and but for the flight of Coletti and his wife, many would have supposed that young Dufour and his guide had perished by some accident in the mountain passes. But the disappearance of the landlord and Annetta entirely negated this supposition.

Madame Dufour, her daughter, Leroux, and Jules Previn were once more collected round the family tea-table, when Leroux, who had been for some time wrapped in thought, spoke aloud.

"We can none of us ever know rest or peace till we are assured of the fate of poor Adolphe."

"No, indeed," said all.

"I propose to obtain permission from the landlord of the Rouge-gorge to pull that unlucky house down. I cannot but think we may find some traces of Adolphe and the guide. Do you not remember that in searching before I found a doubloon?"

"Well?"

"Well, that proves to my mind that the robbery was committed *there*; and on close search we might find— Yea," said Leroux, making an effort, "we might find Adolphe himself."

A deep silence followed.

"I will buy this house to-morrow," continued Leroux. "We will relieve our minds from this torturing suspense. Even to know the worst would be preferable."

"O yes! O yes!"

The conversation closed; but in the morning Leroux proceeded to the Corsican gentleman of whom the miscreant Coletti had rented the auberge and its grounds. He found him a fine old hearty fellow, deeply sympathising with the Dufour family, and very willing to sell the luckless inn.

"Indeed, M. Leroux," he said, "I had resolved on pulling down the accursed place myself, so I will not take a copper coin for it. Come you here as soon as you like with a party, and I will join you with another. We will search together. I will not leave one stone of the vile place standing. Such a story is a disgrace to Corsica!"

Leroux thanked him warmly, and appointed the next day at two o'clock in the afternoon. This was fully agreed on, and he accepted the old farmer's hospitality for the night. The house was but five miles from the Rouge-gorge.

In the morning Leroux, the farmer, and a party of six or eight, set out for the ill-fated hostelry. It loomed grim and ominous against the clear sky; and as Leroux thought of the stirring events of the last twelve months, he felt a strange sensation at the sight of the house, the entering of which by Adolphe and Previn had brought about so much sorrow. It seemed to him as if the veil of this strange mystery was about to be lifted. He could see daylight looming through the darkness. Then there was that unfortunate Annetta. That she had

suspected foul play was certain, or else why that slip of paper on which was written, "Follow : Naples"? Poor girl, she had paid for her partisanship with her life!

As they approached the house the good farmer (whose name was Buonarotti) said gravely :

"It looks gloomy, does it not?"

Leroux assented with a sigh, and the party dismounted. They proceeded to search the rooms as before. All were apparently in the same state, save that everything was shrouded in the pall of dust which had accumulated. They searched cupboards, tried planks, sounded chimneys, but found no evidence of the missing Adolphe. All at once Buonarotti stopped short.

"Ah," he said, "I remember above there was a small chamber which I latterly had boarded in, because the flooring was somewhat unsafe. You gain access to it by a sliding door, carefully concealed beneath the old tapestry, for this was once a nobleman's house. What a fool I was to have forgotten it!"

"Let us examine it," said Leroux.

They proceeded, in company with their fellow-searchers, to the room which had been occupied by Adolphe Dufour. The secret chamber was within it.

Suddenly they stopped short.

The idea had occurred to all—what a sight they might possibly encounter there. Leroux drew back.

Buonarotti was the first to recover his self-possession.

"It must be done," he said, as he pushed back the panel.

The little chamber was shrouded in darkness—so much so, that they were forced to strike a light. Then they observed the figure of a man crouching down in the furthest corner.

"O," said Leroux, "it is the body of Adolphe!"

But as they advanced they saw the figure move. *It was alive!* Breathless with suspense they advanced still nearer, when the form sprang towards them with a yell that made the whole house reëcho.

It was Caravarri!

Yes, it was Caravarri. His hair was grown about his shoulders, his beard reached to his waist, his eyes were sunk and dim, and his nails like birds' claws. But it *was* Caravarri.

On the table was an earthenware vessel full of—of water?

No. Full of gold napoleons and doubloons!

The miserable wretch saw that he was lost. The agonies of remorse had been worse to him than could be the hangman's cord.

He hastened to make the following confession:

On that unlucky night, when Dufour and Previn had taken shelter at the Rouge-gorge, he had overheard the remark of the former relative to the value of the contents of his valise, and had suggested to his half-brother Coletti the idea of robbing him and taking flight. For

this purpose Caravarri ensconced himself in the inner chamber, intending, when Dufour was asleep, to steal the valise, but with no intention, as he averred, of taking his life. But whilst he was committing the robbery Dufour awoke, and, being a determined little man, resolved not to sacrifice his sister's dowry without a struggle. This grew hot and fierce; and Coletti, who had been on the watch listening for the issue of the infamous plot, entered, and dashed in poor Adolphe's skull with a wood-axe. Caravarri, terrified, was compelled, by the brutal threats of Coletti, to keep silence, and the booty was divided. In the morning Coletti absented himself, hoping that Jules Previn would proceed to Ajaccio without inquiry; whilst Caravarri, in his fear, hid himself closely in the secret closet with his share of the gold. When the coast was clear Coletti returned for his wife; but he could not persuade Caravarri to accompany them. The latter would not keep the company of a murderer: he had intended to be a thief, but not to shed blood. Poor Annetta had been compelled to accompany her rascally husband, but it was at the suggestion of Caravarri that she had left the note and the double doubloon. The glitter of the coin, it was thought, would attract notice, and the searcher might then observe the end of the note protruding from the mat. The miserable Caravarri had lived a year shut up in this prison, subsisting only on such salt meat and water as he dared steal out by night and take from the kitchen stock.

"And O, signori, what I have suffered! Ah, that poor little laughing gentleman!"

"But, Adolphe! Great God, where is *he*?"

"His body is buried in the dried-up well!"

It will be remembered that in the first chapter allusion was made to this well, which the exceeding drought of that summer had caused to be dry. The body of the poor little Frenchman was thrown by the wretch Coletti on to the rubbish in the well, and then further rubbish was thrown on the body itself.

Caravarri was put under the care of two of the party, and the remainder, with Leroux and Buonarotti, proceeded, with hearts full of emotion, to the well.

There was no doubt now. All was certainty.

The stones were cleared out, the rubbish extracted, and in a few minutes Leroux was kneeling with covered face beside the remains of the missing son.

Lost sight of for a year, the dead was found at last.


Leroux resolved to have poor Adolphe removed to Ajaccio, in order that he might rest in the near neighbourhood of those who had loved him, and who so deeply mourned his miserable fate.

Under his direction the body was borne reverently into the house, and laid tenderly upon the table of Annetta's kitchen.

Suddenly a great cry burst from the outside passage.

It was from the two men who had been guarding Caravarri.





• • •

CHRISTMAS IN THE OLDEN TIME

I.

O, do you remember the capital fun we had
Down at Moat Hall, when their Christmas they kept
In the old English mode *à la* Gilbert? But one we had :
Or Sir Hugh in his tomb had assuredly slept.
Tudor in style is the place,—just the thing for it,—
Fine open roofing and black oaken wall ;
Hearth so enormous, whole saplings they bring for it ;—
Built to keep Christmas, be sure, was Moat Hall !

II.

Wheeled loads of mistletoe, laurel, and holly brought,
Banners, and armour that knights never wore,
Gave to the place the right feeling, and—jolly thought !—
Rushes were ankle-deep strewn on the floor.
As for the tables, the *carte* was Plantagenet ;
The beef was a baron (Sir Hugh thought it small) ;
And a draggle-tail peacock, with plenty of age in it,
Lent a natural grace to the feast at Moat Hall.

III.

There were huge shields of brawn, which to eat is detestable,
Of ven'son a pasty, with turkey and chine,
And of course the boar's head, looking most indigestible,
Brought in by the cook when we sat down to dine.
There were barrels to broach too, and tankards to foam for us,
And a famous blackjack, with spur, rowel and all,
But hardly from boots, though expressly brought home for us,
We cared to be drinking our wine at Moat Hall.

IV.

The dyspeptic refection we manfully struggled through,
And from flagons and goblets drank many a toast ;
A stupid old custom which most of us smuggled through,
Though we gallantly pledged both our hostess and host.
Then the tables were clear'd, and to mirth we went steadily—
To "sports" and to "pastimes," instead of a ball ;
But courtly gymnastics do not very readily
Suit over-fed people like those at Moat Hall.

V.

But first we'd a masque, which in point of fatuity
Made acted charades the perfection of wit ;
Then the cushion-dance, cream of perverse ingenuity,
With a trifle more dancing than pleasure in *it* ;
Sir Roger de Coverley came an old friend to us,
Compared with that petrified horror, the Brawl ;
And forfeits and romps very near put an end to us,
And left us for dead on the floor of Moat Hall.

VI.

O, those revels in aid of King Christmas and retinue,
How little we hoped their delights to survive !
But the darlings with tresses—gold, russet, and jet in hue,
And bright eyes to match—fairly kept us alive.
And I might have been bless'd, but those rushes confounded there,
Tripp'd me up as I near'd *her*, and gave me a sprawl ;
And love was extinguish'd in laughter unbounded there,
That hideous Christmas we spent at Moat Hall !

WILLIAM SAWYER

THE GHOST'S SUMMONS

BY ADA BUISSON

"WANTED, sir—a patient."

It was in the early days of my professional career, when patients were scarce and fees scarcer; and though I was in the act of sitting down to my chop, and had promised myself a glass of steaming punch afterwards, in honour of the Christmas season, I hurried instantly into surgery.

I entered briskly; but no sooner did I catch sight of the figure standing leaning against the counter than I started back with a strange feeling of horror which for the life of me I could not comprehend.

Never shall I forget the ghastliness of that face—the white horror stamped upon every feature—the agony which seemed to sink the very eyes beneath the contracted brows; it was awful to me to behold, accustomed as I was to scenes of terror.

"You seek advice," I began, with some hesitation.

"No; I am not ill."

"You require then—"

"Hush!" he interrupted, approaching more nearly, and dropping already low murmur to a mere whisper. "I believe you are not ill. Would you be willing to earn a thousand pounds?"

A thousand pounds! His words seemed to burn my very ears.

"I should be thankful, if I could do so honestly," I replied with diffidence. "What is the service required of me?"

A peculiar look of intense horror passed over the white face before me; but the blue-black lips answered firmly, "To attend a death-bed."

"A thousand pounds to attend a death-bed! Where am I to go, and whose is it?"

"*Mine.*"

The voice in which this was said sounded so hollow and distant, that involuntarily I shrank back. "Yours! What nonsense! You are not a dying man. You are pale, but you appear perfectly healthy."

"Hush!" he interrupted; "I know all this. You cannot be more deceived of my physical health than I am myself; yet I know that before the clock tolls the first hour after midnight I shall be a dead man."

"But—"

He shuddered slightly; but stretching out his hand commandingly, he motioned me to be silent. "I am but too well informed of what I mean," he said quietly; "I have received a mysterious summons from the dead. No mortal aid can avail me. I am as doomed as the wretch upon whom the judge has passed sentence. I do not come either to seek advice or to argue the matter with you, but simply to buy your

services. I offer you a thousand pounds to pass the night in my chamber, and witness the scene which takes place. The sum may appear to you extravagant. But I have no further need to count the cost of any gratification; and the spectacle you will have to witness is no common sight of horror."

The words, strange as they were, were spoken calmly enough; but as the last sentence dropped slowly from the livid lips, an expression of such wild horror again passed over the stranger's face, that, in spite of the immense fee, I hesitated to answer.

"You fear to trust to the promise of a dead man! See here, and be convinced," he exclaimed eagerly; and the next instant, on the counter between us lay a parchment document; and following the indication of that white muscular hand, I read the words, "And to Mr. Frederick Read, of 14 High-street, Alton, I bequeath the sum of one thousand pounds for certain service rendered to me."

"I have had that will drawn up within the last twenty-four hours, and I signed it an hour ago, in the presence of competent witnesses. I am prepared, you see. Now, do you accept my offer, or not?"

My answer was to walk across the room and take down my hat, and then lock the door of the surgery communicating with the house.

* * * * *

It was a dark, icy-cold night, and somehow the courage and determination which the sight of my own name in connection with a thousand pounds had given me, flagged considerably as I found myself hurried along through the silent darkness by a man whose death-bed I was about to attend.

He was grimly silent; but as his hand touched mine, in spite of the frost, it felt like a burning coal.

On we went—tramp, tramp, through the snow—on, on, till even I grew weary, and at length on my appalled ear struck the chimes of a church-clock; whilst close at hand I distinguished the snowy hillocks of a churchyard.

Heavens! was this awful scene of which I was to be the witness to take place veritably amongst the dead?

"Eleven," groaned the doomed man. "Gracious God! but two hours more, and that ghostly messenger will bring the summons. Come, come; for mercy's sake, let us hasten."

There was but a short road separating us now from a wall which surrounded a large mansion, and along this we hastened until we reached a small door.

Passing through this, in a few minutes we were stealthily ascending the private staircase to a splendidly-furnished apartment, which left no doubt of the wealth of its owner.

All was intensely silent, however, through the house; and about this room in particular there was a stillness that, as I gazed around, struck me as almost ghastly.

My companion glanced at the clock on the mantelshelf, and sank into a large chair by the side of the fire with a shudder. "Only an hour and a half longer," he muttered. "Great heaven! I thought I had more fortitude. This horror unmans me." Then, in a fiercer tone, and clutching my arm, he added, "Ha! you mock me, you think me mad; but wait till you see—wait till you see!"

I put my hand on his wrist; for there was now a fever in his unken eyes which checked the superstitious chill which had been gathering over me, and made me hope that, after all, my first suspicion was correct, and that my patient was but the victim of some fearful hallucination.

"Mock you?" I answered soothingly. "Far from it; I sympathise intensely with you, and would do much to aid you. You require sleep. Lie down, and leave me to watch."

He groaned, but rose, and began throwing off his clothes; and, catching my opportunity, I slipped a sleeping-powder, which I had managed to put in my pocket before leaving the surgery, into the tumbler of claret that stood beside him.

The more I saw, the more I felt convinced that it was the nervous system of my patient which required my attention; and it was with sincere satisfaction I saw him drink the wine, and then stretch himself on the luxurious bed.

"Ha," thought I, as the clock struck twelve, and instead of a groan, the deep breathing of the sleeper sounded through the room; "you won't receive any summons to-night, and I may make myself comfortable."

Noiselessly, therefore, I replenished the fire, poured myself out a large glass of wine, and drawing the curtain so that the firelight should not disturb the sleeper, I put myself in a position to follow his example.

How long I slept I know not, but suddenly I aroused with a start and a ghostly thrill of horror as ever I remember to have felt in my life.

Something—what, I knew not—seemed near, something nameless, but unutterably awful.

I gazed round.

The fire emitted a faint blue glow, just sufficient to enable me to see that the room was exactly the same as when I fell asleep, but that the long hand of the clock wanted but five minutes of the mysterious hour which was to be the death-moment of the "summoned" man!

Was there anything in it, then?—any truth in the strange story he had told?

The silence was intense.

I could not even hear a breath from the bed; and I was about to rise and approach, when again that awful horror seized me, and at the same moment my eye fell upon the mirror opposite the door, and I saw—

Great heaven! that awful Shape—that ghastly mockery of what had been humanity—was it really a messenger from the buried, quiet dead?

It stood there in visible death-clothes; but the awful face was

ghastly with corruption, and the sunken eyes gleamed forth a green glassy glare which seemed a veritable blast from the infernal fires below.

To move or utter a sound in that hideous presence was impossible; and like a statue I sat and saw that horrid Shape move slowly towards the bed.

What was the awful scene enacted there, I know not. I heard nothing, except a low stifled agonised groan; and I saw the shadow of that ghastly messenger bending over the bed.

Whether it was some dreadful but wordless sentence its breathless lips conveyed as it stood there, I know not; but for an instant the shadow of a claw-like hand, from which the third finger was missing, appeared extended over the doomed man's head; and then, as the clock struck one clear silvery stroke, it fell, and a wild shriek rang through the room—a death-shriek.

I am not given to fainting, but I certainly confess that the next ten minutes of my existence was a cold blank; and even when I did manage to stagger to my feet, I gazed round, vainly endeavouring to understand the chilly horror which still possessed me.

Thank God! the room was rid of that awful presence—I saw that; so, gulping down some wine, I lighted a wax-taper and staggered towards the bed. Ah, how I prayed that, after all, I might have been dreaming, and that my own excited imagination had but conjured up some hideous memory of the dissecting-room!

But one glance was sufficient to answer that.

No! The summons had indeed been given and answered.

I flashed the light over the dead face, swollen, convulsed still with the death-agony; but suddenly I shrank back.

Even as I gazed, the expression of the face seemed to change: the blackness faded into a deathly whiteness; the convulsed features relaxed, and, even as if the victim of that dread apparition still lived, a sad solemn smile stole over the pale lips.

I was intensely horrified, but still I retained sufficient self-consciousness to be struck professionally by such a phenomenon.

Surely there was something more than supernatural agency in all this?

Again I scrutinised the dead face, and even the throat and chest; but, with the exception of a tiny pimple on one temple beneath a cluster of hair, not a mark appeared. To look at the corpse, one would have believed that this man had indeed died by the visitation of God, peacefully, whilst sleeping.

How long I stood there I know not, but time enough to gather my scattered senses and to reflect that, all things considered, my own position would be very unpleasant if I was found thus unexpectedly in the room of the mysteriously dead man.

So, as noiselessly as I could, I made my way out of the house. No one met me on the private staircase; the little door opening into the

I was easily unfastened; and thankful indeed was I to feel again fresh wintry air as I hurried along that road by the churchyard.

* * * * *

There was a magnificent funeral soon in that church; and it was that the young widow of the buried man was inconsolable; and then hours got abroad of a horrible apparition which had been seen on the night of the death; and it was whispered the young widow was terrified, insisted upon leaving her splendid mansion.

I was too mystified with the whole affair to risk my reputation by saying what I knew, and I should have allowed my share in it to remain for ever buried in oblivion, had I not suddenly heard that the widow, objecting to many of the legacies in the last will of her husband, intended to dispute it on the score of insanity, and then there gradually arose the rumour of his belief in having received a mysterious summons.

On this I went to the lawyer, and sent a message to the lady, that, the *last person* who had attended her husband, I undertook to prove her sanity; and I besought her to grant me an interview, in which I could relate as strange and horrible a story as ear had ever heard.

The same evening I received an invitation to go to the mansion.

I was ushered immediately into a splendid room, and there, standing before the fire, was the most dazzlingly beautiful young creature I had ever seen.

She was very small, but exquisitely made; had it not been for the dignity of her carriage, I should have believed her a mere child.

With a stately bow she advanced, but did not speak.

"I come on a strange and painful errand," I began, and then I started, for I happened to glance full into her eyes, and from them turned to the small right hand grasping the chair. The *wedding-ring* was on that hand!

"I conclude you are the Mr. Read who requested permission to tell me some absurd ghost-story, and whom my late husband mentions often." And as she spoke she stretched out her left hand towards something—but what I knew not, for my eyes were fixed on that hand.

Horror! White and delicate it might be, but it was shaped like a wisp, and the third finger was missing!

One sentence was enough after that. "Madam, all I can tell you is that the ghost who summoned your husband was marked by a similar deformity. The third finger of the left hand was missing," I said calmly; and the next instant I had left that beautiful sinful presence.

* * * * *

That will was never disputed. The next morning, too, I received a check for a thousand pounds; and the next news I heard of the widow was, that she had herself seen that awful apparition, and had left the mansion immediately.

DIANA GAY

J. Hobbs

BY THE AUTHOR OF "BELLA DONNA," "NEVER FORGOTTEN," ETC. ETC.

Book the First.

CHAPTER XI. THE DAY.

"T'OULD garse cover" was in a very picturesque corner of the park, and a green grass coasted by it. All the rustics had taken a short cut over the fields to see the great meet; and as Lady Margaret Bowyer's carriage rolls along the soft green lane, of which there were some miles in the demesne, she sees among the old trees patches of scarlet flashing brightly, and a general shifting and flutter of colours. It seems as though there was to be a race.

The Calthorpe Hunt has mustered some forty strong—considered a very great meet for that time of the year. It is a perfect cluster of open carriages, with a couple of drags which have "bowled" over from Ironston, and are laden with the ladies of the hunting officers of the Du Barrys, and from beneath the white overcoats of these gallant gentlemen many a shining top-boot emerges. Scarlet gentlemen are tramping to and fro from one carriage to the other; and here is Miss Diana looking down from D'Orsay, the dandy's back, on a whole group. She is not unsupported; for Miss Crowder, with a scarlet feather in her hat, and a "stand-up" man's-collar, has cantered up beside her on a handsome horse, which, though of exceeding price, has a manufacturing air, as though he but represented money, and money alone. Beside him D'Orsay seemed a creature born in the purple. As she cantered up, she must almost have heard from the drag-roof the rather free-and-easy sobriquet "Kitty Crowder" said all but aloud; for such a penalty does this pleasant familiarity with the warriors entail.

"Kitty" was in high spirits. "Where is the lord's son, dear?" she said, looking round. "What! doesn't he hunt? Is he a sneak? O, I must know him; indeed I must. You must—there he is with the sharp face. Let's ride over to him, and you introduce me."

Diana hesitated. She had great dignity, and though liking "fun," would speak and draw herself up in defence of the smallest of the proprieties.

"Indeed, I can do no such thing," she said. "He would think it very odd. I hardly know him myself."

"Indeed he would not, now," said Kitty in a loud voice. "You never were more out in your life. Never mind; I'll manage it some-

how during the hunt. I'll speak to him myself, and tell him you wouldn't introduce me. You must learn not to keep all the men to yourself, Miss Diana."

Diana smiled. She knew her friend's ways, and was not offended. Kitty had forgotten the matter in a moment, and was scouring the field with her large eyes. Then Lugard rode up, with his father by his side, who was exquisitely appointed, as though he were going to a ball, the delicate feminine toilette and eternal simper being marked on his face. His horse looked as if *his* coat had been carefully brushed and left without a speck. Mr. Lugard looked almost as gay as his son; and when he took off his hat to Miss Diana, his thin hair seemed smoothed and parted elegantly as if on a lady's forehead.

"This eager man is like a schoolboy, and would not let me lose a minute."

"I am so glad you have come, Mr. Lugard," said Diana; "but look at darling D'Orsay; he is the handsomest creature on the ground."

Mr. Lugard looked down on himself with a simper, as who should say, "You don't count me, I suppose."

Every face was there, from the straw-coloured terrier-dog faces of the military to Mr. Pratt, the gentleman who had pronounced on D'Orsay, and from whose pen the *Mercury* led its readers to expect a graphic account of the day's run. "We may promise our readers," said that journal, "that our valued Venator will limn Reynard's course with more than his usually graphic pen." He came rocking and jogging up to Diana, and said solemnly, "Well, miss, I see you've *him* out to-day. No, no, no! won't do, miss—want's a little sense."

"You're jealous, Mr. Pratt," said Diana, laughing; then to her friend: "He thinks nothing like that cart-horse of his."

Here now was Featherston, our esteemed M. F. H., coming up with a quick business air, attended by his two aides-de-camp, as though he were about to clear the course. Featherston was the name in every mouth: we had drank his health; we had found fault with him; we had not supported him with the subscriptions. Featherston had again and again said that after "*this* year" he would resign the hounds to a better man; and again and again, feeling deep compunction for so treating a man who had stood by the sport so nobly, we had conjured him to retract; and Featherston had given way. The probabilities were he would "hunt" the Calthorpe pack till he died or was killed.

"Now, Gay," he said, "time's up—we'll turn the hounds in.—Now, gentlemen, look out; it won't be a second's business, for the place is alive with them; and for God's sake, gentlemen, let's have no tailor-riding here, or walking over my dogs, as we had last day with that man-milliner.—Now, Tom, in with them."

In a moment the Calthorpe pack, that seemed all wooden tails and ears, and who were the hereditary Sweetlips, Boxers, Nippers, &c., who had an air of eager business, plunged into the cover. Instantly the

talking ceased, reins were gathered up, and his lordship was seen by the *Mercury's* reporter, who never had his eye off him a moment, to throw away a cigar. There was a crackling and rustling in the under-wood of the covert; the white sterns of the hounds are seen among the leaves; Sweetlips, known for "a true note," gives a cry, and we know for certain that the fox is at home. Suddenly, from far to the left comes the cry, "Gone away!" but from a throat as foolish as some of the younger dogs; and at once a "counter-jumper" and some "tailors"—so our M. F. H. described them later—plunged away frantically. Some of the "tailors" proved later to be Major Spring and Mr. Collins.

"Look at those donkeys," said Dick Lugard to Diana; "they've ruined everything!"

So they had nearly, for the field was undecided. Some had gone on, and "Reynard"—his conventional title in all hunting descriptions—having made up his mind to escape, and rushing out through one of his private corridors, had suddenly turned back into his castle.

Our M. F. H. was furious. He came riding up like a general to some echort that has not done its duty. His words were sharp and sarcastic. Then he collects his hounds, and again puts them in. A sudden roar of delighted agony from the whole pack. There is no mistake this time. General M. F. H. is looking round with his hand up and his eye on the "tailors," who but for that restraint would be at it again. There they go, in a bright dappled stream, pouring, as it were, from an opening in the hedge, spreading over the green grass country, heads down, tongues out, tails up. Now our M. F. H. settles well down in his saddle at the tail of the pack, with his two aides-de-camp; and now the theatrical huntsmen are seen making quietly for the high-road. The carriages begin to roll along the highway, the coachmen flogging their horses to keep up or "head" the hounds off by some short cut. It was a ruck, a delightful rout—schoolboys on ponies, ladies on horses, and bumpkins on nothing at all, scouring along, laughing and eager. Now sounded out the cry of the dogs, as they were full on the open country; now rang out the horn; now the cheerful, scarlet vanished in a flash, as all—fox, hounds, riders—disappeared round a plantation. His lordship kept well up, and was beginning to be pleased; only the Irish horse, coming to a low wall, proceeded to take it after the manner he was accustomed to in his own land—with "a top and a drop," which almost discomposed him. The country was stiff, and yet not dangerous; and his lordship found himself taken over everything successfully, and grew exhilarated under such circumstances.

We admire and are pleased with everything when in reality we are only pleased with ourselves. Even the praise which in strict fairness was owing to his horse, his lordship took to himself—"I brought him over that fence in good style, I think."

There was a pink flush in Diana's cheek, and a brightness in her

ye, as she flew along on D'Orsay. D'Orsay took her over everything. Often her father's voice was heard beside her, gently warning—

"Now, now, tootsums! Do take care, petay!"

But when she *would* go on, and, flying over, look back with a laugh, she could only say to his neighbours,

"Well, well, she is a wild child!"

Dick Lugard, mounted on a handsome horse, kept near her the whole day; he rode well, but, according to his character, "going" at everything, and succeeding from sheer recklessness. He got one good "shaking" fall, and rose up, pettishly resenting the affront. As he mounted, he could see Robert Bligh riding steadily on a round-built, loose-knit cob; calmly hunting, measuring everything, and "taking" every jump with a sure and calculated precision that irritated his friend.

"Look at Doctor Syntax; he's managed to pick up a horse like himself. Wonderful fellow! He's as canny as any born Scotchman. There he goes again! See, he won't take that—*there*! That's a more comfortable bit."

Diana, cantering along and looking back, said:

"Well, I don't know; that seemed a stiffer part where he *did* take it. Dear me, what are they doing now?"

They galloped forward; they had been coming down a hill, at the bottom of which ran a little stream, which a mile or so farther on widened into the great Cale river, famous for its fishing. All had clustered at its edge; some were cantering up and down its side wildly; the dogs were running backwards and forwards in deep agitation, with their noses to the ground. Our excellent M. F. H. is cantering this way and that. Had a fellow-creature fallen in, and was he then struggling in drowning agonies, there could not have been so much excitement. Alas, it was a far greater misfortune! That fatal stream—of which some had had their forebodings—had undone them. The crafty Reyard had either got across, or found a drain, or earth-hole. He was gone: faces lengthened. His lordship looked as he had looked three years before, when news was brought him that his under agent had gone off with two thousand pounds. Even Diana began to pout prettily.

"Nasty perverse thing," she said, "he does it on purpose."

A speech that made her father laugh loud, and which he often repeated at dinners.

"Look at our friend Syntax," said Lugard to her, smiling; "he has gone off there on a quiet trot, for fear his horse should get chilled. Never forgets the main chance. At school they used to call him Praiseworthy Bob."

Mr. Lugard did not say "we," for he never affected any air of familiarity with his friend.

Praiseworthy Bob had in effect ridden slowly up the river, with his eye on the ground, and had turned the corner of a plantation.

Suddenly they heard a cry—a cheerful note. Everyone started; the dogs pricked up their ears. In a second they saw Bligh afar off, and waving his cap. What joy, what delight, what winding of the horn! It was all scamper and rout. Everyone was gone in a second save Miss Diana, who had dismounted to have her saddle-girths tightened.

"Now, Di," said her father, gathering up his reins, and looking out wistfully, for nothing abated his paternal instincts. "Do look sharp."

Lugard did look sharp. "I declare our friend Syntax is quite coming out," he said, as he remounted; "look at him jogging on in front."

They were not very much behind, but Mr. Gay, on his great strong horse, had gone forward to join his lordship. The course was still by the river, which was widening gradually. Lugard was behind, but making way up; and Miss Diana said a little fretfully:

"I can't make D'Orsay go, somehow. He's in one of his humours to-day."

Suddenly he pricked up his trembling ears, and gave a half swerve.

"All right," said Lugard, "it's that bumpkin with the gun in the plantation. But why on earth should he be—"

By the next second the bumpkin with the gun had fired it at some sparrows. There was a plunge, a scattering of clay and stones, and D'Orsay had plunged away like a demon—head down, heels out. He had gone like an arrow. And there on his back—as on some poor shelf—was resting the frail figure of Diana.

Lugard saw this with a sort of agony, and in his agitation actually reined-up his horse. In another moment she was lost to view.

Fox and hunters and hounds were far away by this time. When he could see her no more, he put spurs to his horse and plunged frantically forward. Another horseman was coming across the field in a diagonal line. He knew it was Bligh, but riding at a pace that the cob-hunter had not exhibited before on that day. Even at that moment of excitement Lugard's lip curled. "He wants to overtake her, the fool!" he said; then called out, waving his hand, "Keep back; it will only make her horse go faster! Do you hear?" But Bligh did not pay the least attention. "The donkey!" Lugard said aloud.

Meanwhile he had now got to the top of a hill, and could look down. To his horror he saw that the horse and rider were gone; and looking down, he could see a small dark object struggling in the river—for into a river the little Cale stream had widened at this place, with a strong violent current. Trees overhung it with crooked branches, seated on which the fisherman watched his line for hours. Hounds were far away across the country after Reynard, who was beginning to show signs of weariness, as well he might, poor wretch. Even Mr. Gay, exhilarated and excited, was shouting "Yoicks!" or "Hark for'ard!" or some such proper cry. For the moment he had forgotten his little Diana.

Before Lugard had recovered, Bligh was half-way down the hill. The other followed. In a moment both were at the edge; and there, far out in the strong waters flowing steadily, was seen D'Orsay plunging frantically, with one paw entangled in the habit, and our Diana, her cheek blanched with terror, clinging to his neck with both arms.

"My God! What shall we do? I can't swim; but this horse can."

"Don't think of it!" said the other hastily. "You will only be in danger: the current is too strong."

"And what can we do?—what folly you talk!"

"Leave it to me," said the other quietly; "I can save her; but not here: I must get far lower down.—Hold on," he shouted; "I'll save you! Cling to the horse for your life!"

In a moment he had his coat off, and was running hard along the bank. The wretched D'Orsay was still plunging; but not a cry came from Diana, whose little figure seemed to be now gliding slowly away out of life.

But Lugard's nature was the same under all circumstances. His lip was curling; and as his friend rushed away, he said aloud, "O, *that's* his game, is it? We'll see!" and putting spurs to his horse, he walked him into the water, and in a second he was up to his middle.

Rushing along the river-side, Bligh got past the point where Diana was still struggling. At that instant she turned her pale face, and as she saw him pass by—only then—uttered a cry, a scream of despair, at such abandonment. But Bligh had observed a rugged point of the shore which jutted out farther on, and from this he had determined to make his start. He ran out on this, and stripping off his shoes, was in the water in a moment. So cleverly had he calculated the force of the current, against which he could only make way a very little, that it was sure to carry him close to the struggling horse; but almost as soon as he started, another cry came from the unhappy maiden, who saw her coming deliverer turn back and make for the land again.

Almost as soon as he started, he had seen, lying snugly sheltered in a little creek, a tiny flat-bottomed boat, with paddles attached, which was indeed a boat of salvation. After this the rescue came easy; though even here he showed his surprising restraint and thought, for he saw the force of the current, and waited until the unhappy Diana, now releasing D'Orsay's neck and tossing her arms wildly, had passed by some twenty yards; then he let go, and rowing hard, was borne down right upon them.

He called to her firmly and decidedly: "You must do exactly what I tell you, and at the exact moment." D'Orsay was growing helpless, and giving over his plunging. She was saved. Heaven be praised, here was the bank; and at the same moment as he drew his last stroke he heard a faint shout from the bank he had left behind, and saw the whole crest lined with scarlet coats and horses and dogs.

When he had lifted Diana off, and got her safely on shore, she sank down sobbing and wringing her hands. D'Orsay stood there trembling and shrinking, and much cowed and exhausted. It was pronounced in the stables that that wetting had done him a world of good. Bligh tied him quietly to a tree, and then pulling out his little flask from his pocket, put some of the spirit on a handkerchief, and pressed it to her. Suddenly he recollected Lugard, and looked up and down the river, but could not see him. Then he heard a clatter of hoofs, and Mr. Gay, who had galloped desperately half a mile, raced across the broad country bridge, flung himself to the ground, and had his darling Diana in his arms. A carriage soon came up; but Diana, every moment recovering from her fright, all wet as she was, insisted on riding home, not on the faithless D'Orsay, who was condemned to disgrace, but on Mr. Bligh's steady cob horse, who, like his master, would make no mistake.

Every moment our Diana was recovering her spirits. She began to laugh at her limp habit, and put out her small hand to Bligh, with a—"Dear Mr. Bligh, how shall I ever acknowledge your kindness?"

Mr. Gay wrung him as a terrier would a rat. "My dear, dear old fellow, you are a hero, and you've laid us under an eternal obligation. Such a cool, dashing, gallant exploit! My God! to think of my little girl being so near danger! It makes me tremble all over. I must keep a tight rein on her, for she is a little too brave. Did you ever see such a spirit? No shrieking or roaring, but kept her head all the time. My dear boy,"—and he wrung him again,—“what *can* I say or do for you?"

Now came cantering over the bridge our friend Dick Lugard, who, however, slackened his pace into a walk as he drew near the party. Indeed, Mr. Lugard had a very downcast air, and seemed only half pleased. Only then Bligh recollected about him.

"How did you manage, Lugard?" he said eagerly. "What became of you? You were wise enough not to try the water with your horse?"

"I beg *your* pardon, I did," said the other sharply; "but I found the current too strong. We had hard work to save ourselves."

A countryman was standing by, and struck in: "Oi, oi! we pull out t' horse; and 'ard wark it wer. 'Twer lucky for he, he got on thot tree."

"O yes," said Bligh; "I saw that very projecting tree which you got on, and left the horse to swim."

"No horse could have made way against such a stream," said Lugard petulantly; "impossibilities are not to be done nowadays. It was all very well for *you*, who could swim."

"No matter, my dear fellow," said Mr. Gay; "*you will do it the next time*. Now we must get along. Just go to Lord Bellman, and tell him they will have another fox presently. I must go home with my pet. I hope to heaven she won't get cold now." And he cantered

off; and the hunting-men, seeing it was no more than "that the girl had got a ducking," soon were at work at another famous covert, where Reynard—another Reynard—showed himself almost at once, and was "run into" about three fields off. This was scarcely satisfactory; but there was another covert close by, and there, with equal promptness and courtesy, another showed himself—Reynard the third—a strong enduring fellow, who got slyly away, and was seen going over the hill. Then followed a run indeed, well 'cross country, far away from brooks and rivers, nothing but good straight hard riding, and hard riders. The pace was stiff, many "tailed" off; and after fifteen miles there was only his lordship, Bligh, the clever "limner," the "professionals," and our admirable M. F. II. close up. Ah, we should have read the "limning" that appeared in the *Mercury*: it was considered Mr. Pratt's best effort. Indeed, that number of the *Mercury* was a very remarkable one; for it besides gave full details of "what had nearly proved a melancholy casualty, and had well-nigh cast a gloom over that auspicious day." It was indeed a great hunting-day, and towards eight o'clock a couple of splashed elongated horses came walking wearily to Gay Court, bearing his lordship and Bligh; the former in great good-humour, and protesting that he had not had such a day for a long time.

CHAPTER XII.

CONGRATULATIONS.

OUR Diana was not in the least affected by her accident. She resisted all attempts at making her go to bed and other "coddling;" and I hope that the delicate estimate which may have been formed of her character will not be impaired when it is known that she was induced to take a small glassful of very hot brandy-and-water. She indeed felt herself a heroine, and could but be pleased with the infinite and tender interest her escape excited. Lady Margaret devoured, absorbed her into the folds and windings of the laces, silks, and ribbons which lay about that lady's capacious bosom.

"My dear child," she said, "you are too foolish; so full of spirits and courage—you run your little head into mischief. O my! only to think! It gives me a tremble!" And the lady put up her fat hand, with a rustle about her sleeve, to keep out the dreadful prospect. "Now, dearest, you must promise me, when we get you over to Bowman—. I tell you beforehand, I won't leave you. I tell you what," Lady Margaret added with great confidence—"whisper, darling—I'll get the political man to speak to you—our Canning. If he once brings that Foreign Office on you, there's no opposing him."

"O," said Diana, "don't, then! for I should be dreadfully afraid of him and his Foreign Office."

"Indeed, you need not," said Lady Margaret; "he's as gentle as a

girl—to girls. To men, of course—whisper—dear, I'll tell you what he said of you to-day—that you were so like Madame Brenner's daughter—the Belgian minister's, you know."

Diana looked awe-stricken at this comparison.

This was just before dinner—the "first state-dinner," as the *Mercury* called it. Again I say, what would that organ have given to have been present? or even had a glimpse from the far-off door? How he would have revelled in pictures of the Gay-Court plate, the Gay-Court buffet, the flowers, rarest exotics, superb liveries, and delicious dishes! Above all, everything characterised by the most refined and exquisite taste—for which department our *Mercury* was a pledge. It was indeed a handsome spectacle; and Diana had found time in her own calm way to overlook and direct matters to her father's infinite satisfaction. Her department was the flowers—and no lady, with such treasures at her command, need disdain the elegant task of so decorating her table. Diana had been led in, triumphantly stepping out. She knew the precious value of dear life now, which she had never done before, and she regarded all these choice things with a sort of affection.

We need, indeed, a little penal servitude and prison fare to teach us the exquisite value of the cheap blessings of light, sun, air, and moving our limbs, even. But she had come up almost with a little theatrical effect to Bligh, and said:

"Mr. Robert, won't you come and sit near me at dinner? I want to talk to you, and have not thanked you half enough."

Mrs. Bligh was close enough to hear this, and drew herself up with pride. She went up to Diana, and took her hands:

"My dear child, you—you don't know what a happy day this has been for *him*. He may go back to his law now, quite content to plod on. For he will always be looking back to this day—"

"So shall I," said Diana warmly, "and shall always think of him."

Indeed, Mrs. Bligh noticed a seriousness and an older manner about her face. And now Richard Lugard was looking on from a distance. He, too, had changed since the afternoon, and was openly ill-humoured. Bligh saw the old look of sneering on his face, which recalled their schooldays. Lugard heard Diana's grateful invitation to Bligh.

"'Pon my word," he said at dinner, "he ought to have the Legion of Honour, Grand Cross, and all that!"

"I hope," said Bligh, "we shall hear no more of the grand achievement after this. It was nothing wonderful, after all."

"Well, you know you had a punt," said Lugard, "and I must say rowed hard to get up."

"But you forget," said Diana, with some excitement, "that he plunged in first, and swam some time against the current."

"Well, I suppose a man that swims will swim. I don't want to disparage our friend or his glory; but as the point has been raised—"

Mrs. Bligh was at the other side, and listening.

"But we must give all credit where it is due," she said, in her low quiet voice. "What was Mr. Lugard's share?—I have not heard it distinctly; but I hear it was most gallant—swimming across on horse-back, and arriving just a minute—"

"No, no," said her son, laughing. "Where did you pick up that, mother? No, Lugard would have been drowned if he had; and wisely took my advice, and stayed where he was."

The look Lugard gave her, Mrs. Bligh did not soon forget. She looked back at him steadily. At that moment a sort of challenge had passed between them; and Lugard understood that he would find what was wanting in the son made up by the mother.

His lordship was in high good humour with his day; and repeatedly said it was as good a day's hunting as he had ever had. He considered Diana's mishap merely a little *contretemps*. It reminded him, he said, of what happened to him once when hunting in Datchley country, and which he related very fluently; though, indeed, there was no river, in this instance public interest and approbation seemed to consider the cases exactly parallel. That reminded him of the Furley Common business, at which his neighbour, that old greedy Kelpie (the Right Honourable Angus Waters, Earl of Kelpie) had been nibbling for years back. He had tried to get an act; but he, Lord Bellman, had met him there. Then he had tried wheedling, and offered to go shares; but he had been met there; he had encroached a little—not much to speak of; but he meant to go on gradually; but if he took in a rood more Lord Bellman would meet him in the law courts. We all know how pleasantly discursive a person of influence can be on such grievances, and how interested we become in his wrongs, and at what length he can pursue his story; whereas if the "benevolent reader," or the present more humble narrator, be so prolix—but this is a very trite observation.

Being in high good humour, his lordship then came back to the incidents of the day—hunted the hunt over again, as the manner of true sportsmen is; showed how, at the ten-acre field he knew the game was heading off to the right, and he rode up and told the huntsman so; who said, "I believe your lordship is right; but Mr. Featherstone will take his own way." And sure enough, after a quarter of an hour lost, a bumpkin waved his hat, and they had all to tail back in the very direction he had said.

"You lost all that, Mr. Bligh; you were so busy pulling ladies out of the water—a very dashing thing though, in its way."

Mr. Lugard (the father) was not far off; but he had not been in good humour from the beginning of dinner, though he showed his fine and symmetrical teeth very often:

"What I admire in Mr. Bligh is his cool measured way of going about the business—looking round to mark every point in the game, as if he was in his chambers at home. I am sure, if there was a fire, he would dress, and perhaps shave, write a note for the engine,

put it in an envelope, and gum it down. I can't tell you how I admire that faculty, Mrs. Bligh. Your son is sure to get on. Still, Mrs. Bligh," said his lordship laughing, "I shouldn't like that caution in my case. While he was sealing his envelope, Bellman Towers might be burnt."

"Yes," said Mr. Lugard, showing all his very even teeth, "the vulgar way is to obey the first impulse, and run and get a bucket of water. My stupid Richard would have plunged in at once, without thinking whether he could swim; and your keeper, Gay, tells me he never saw such a place. There's a hole twenty feet deep there; so he might be near paying for his folly."

Diana's eyes wandered with a new interest over to Dick, who sat dejected and sulky, and was not speaking to his neighbour.

It seemed that here was injustice; and for the first time Diana thought she had scarcely acknowledged the well-meant attempt, whose only fault was that it had wanted success. Her soft eyes rested on him with encouragement; and indeed, with all the public, it might seem that of the two portraits just drawn his was the most interesting.

Mrs. Bligh perceived this impression.

"What Robert has done seems to be growing smaller and smaller. It now seems to be a blunder."

"And perhaps will end by being a crime," said Mr. Gay warmly. "No, no. No political economy in this house, my dear Bob. I know the full value of what you have done, and I shall never forget it to you; and I thank you, here, heart and soul, for your gallant behaviour. Else," he continued in a lower voice, "I might have been this night what I daren't think of. God Almighty bless you! and I'll be old-fashioned enough to give your health in a bumper."

Everyone filled and drank to him.

Diana, her eyes kindling with enthusiasm, looked to Bligh, and, smiling to him, put her glass to her lips. Dick had to stand up and drink with the rest.

Mr. Gay, had he heard the first part of the little discussion, might have included Richard Lugard in some way. Mrs. Bligh looked over with calm triumph at Mr. Lugard.

Miss Kitty Crowder, who had more tact in small matters, saw by this time that nothing was to be done with "the lord's son," who was dyspeptic, and whose sharp nose seemed to crease with suspicion as he turned to her. She had secured her introduction, to his infinite alarm at this tremendous coming-down on him—so might a yacht be scared by a huge three-decker. She tried him on his "tastes." Hunting—he hated it; balls—he couldn't bear them; country-houses—he didn't care for them; books—they made him ill. And when she was thinking of what on earth she could try him next with, he had abruptly slipped his moorings and got well out to sea in the middle of the room, looking back to her with almost terror.

"What a donkey he is!" said Miss Kitty to herself; and to her late friends later, "What an unlicked oaf!" To Diana and Lady Margaret she said, "He seemed so absurdly shy. What a pity it is! How did he get on in society at all?" &c.; with more of such remarks,—sour grapery, as it might be called.

Indeed, it was surprising what a net of contending little intrigues being spread that night in that drawing-room, which, to Mr. Canning, seemed the seat of pure and pastoral enjoyment. Lady Margaret was "enthroned" far off on the sofa; and it was a pity her busy mind was hampered by that physical unwieldiness of person. She was, as usual, telegraphing mysteriously to Diana to come and have private interviews.

"Sit down beside me, dearest; I want to tell you something, and I'll get Canning over here."

And that gentleman—called away also mysteriously—had to leave a circle of gentlemen with coffee-cups in their hands, to whom he was explaining the critical state of our foreign relations. He was a white-haired gentleman, with small round black whiskers and a very large and prominent forehead, with a small tuft of verdure growing by itself in the middle with an almost comic effort. He had always "on" a sort of forced smile, from a twist in his mouth, as though, one of his friends told him, the upper jaw had been lifted off, like the lid of a china box, and didn't fit close again.

"Come here, Canning," said Lady Margaret with fresh mystery; "be close. I have been telling Diana here what you said about the Brenner."

"O, quite so," said Mr. Canning fluently. "Really, most remarkable, in a room I should have gone up straight to her. I was quite misled—was, indeed, Miss Gay."

"There, I told you so, my dear," Lady Margaret said with a half-mournful shake of her head. "That was at the dinner; Canning said to me this morning. She goes into the first circle in town; isn't it Canning?"

"O dear yes," said that gentleman with a smile. "Of course: father's the minister, you know."

"Wonderful, isn't it?" said Lady Margaret, still mournful. "Canning's so intimate. He was at their last grand concert. They tell me dear, all about peace and war, and all that: or I suppose he gets tired of them. They'll make him secretary or minister one of these days."

"O dear no," said her son, pulling his tuft a little nervously; "but I suppose I'll get something."

Diana was looking from one to the other with her old expression of bewilderment, and not knowing what to say. Mr. Canning then took up the thread again, and spoke very fluently on them. We all have thus met that "family of distinction," whom we quote and take out to show

round, and whose "dinners" we retail conversationally. And so Mr. Canning Bowman continued to tell of the Brenners and the concert again, and of "Christine Brenner," all at great length; Lady Margaret waving her head in wonder, and all but making that "clicking" sound of admiration which the lower Irish do in country chapels at powerful passages of the sermon. By this dwelling on his friends he felt he must have satisfactorily impressed Diana that he was a most agreeable man of the world, and as clever and important as the *Dominion*.

But it was now time to break up. The rest of that night was languid. It was the night of a hunting-day, and the gentlemen were tired. His lordship could scarcely keep his eyes open, and was presently seen with his candle in his hand. People were wishing good-night. Lugard's eyes were wandering round the room, when he heard a whisper: "I am sure you are angry with me; and indeed I deserve it a little."

"For what, pray?" said he, still looking at a photograph.

"O, for not thanking you as I ought. You tried to do so much for me, and I seemed so—"

"What nonsense!" said he impatiently. "I did nothing. I wanted cool Scotch caution, or I could have made as good a *show* as others; and yet, I can tell you, I would have saved you to-day at the risk of my life, only I didn't know how to go about it. I can't make a horse swim."

"I *know* that, indeed," said Diana, now filled with the deepest interest—even compunction. "I wish I could get you to believe me; but you won't."

After all, our sympathies must go with the warm flesh and blood. The intellect is very well in its way. We may respect the colder and nobler virtues; our hearts are with the stage more than with the senate. And when Diana went up thoughtfully to bed that night, of the images that had figured in that exciting day, her eyes followed the image of the dejected "pouting" Lugard, rather than that of his calm, reflecting, and sagacious friend.

CHAPTER XIII.

PLOTS.

LORD BELLMAN was down betimes, as indeed the older hunters always were. He had stepped out of the breakfast-room window on to the lawn, and was walking on, when he met Mrs. Bligh. To that lady he wished a cheerful good-morning. He had expressed a high opinion of her sense and wisdom the night before: "Really an uncommon woman, now—a head like a man's!" He was in a very good humour, and talked to her very cheerfully about that centre of interest to all mothers—a son. Even at that early hour of reticence, with the sun shining brightly, it loosed her tongue, and she told of his

deep sense, his thought, and his "law." "No better opinion for his age, they say, in the Temple—which may mean, too, no better opinion for any age—not one of those technical, unintelligible things they write on law-paper; but friends come to him to know what to do, as in a case like the common you were speaking of last night."

His lordship started. "Ah, indeed, now—you don't tell me so! Here he is himself."

And Robert Bligh appeared, walking eagerly, to join his mother. She, however, left them very soon; and presently Lord Bellman, with some "hems," had introduced his "common."

One of the most curious corner-cupboards in the human heart is that where we keep our private stinginess. The richest or the noblest among us, who will draw a cheque for hundreds without a thought, will yet be eager in some circuitous way to "save a guinea."

"Would you tell me all about it, now, from the beginning?" said Bligh; and for half an hour his lordship "ran on" with many details. Bligh thought a few minutes, and said promptly, "He has no title. The best thing would be to enter on his enclosure and level it. If he goes for redress, he can show no title: he cannot say you have levelled his enclosure."

This idea, which at that time was a little new, burst upon his lordship, and was received with delight. He went away, wondering and filled with admiration.

Now the breakfast-room was filled again, the hum of cheerful morning chatter resounded. There was to be no hunt that day; but there was to be driving out, and an expedition to Calthorpe.

Mrs. Bligh, vigilant always where her affection was, could hear his lordship, almost aloud, talking with infinite satisfaction of "that clever young man down there," who had given him a plain and practical opinion that morning, which was really worth all that "my professional fellow" would tell me in a week—such a capital plan; and Mr. Gay stooped to one side to get a view of Bligh under this new glory, a most natural motion in a host who feels that a guest's credit reflects a good deal on himself.

Again was Diana, fresh as the morning itself, enthroned at the teapot. Somehow she had nursed her sympathy for "that poor wounded fellow" Lugard during the night, and had come down determined to make it up to him.

It seemed hard to resist her, as her delicate little throat, rising out of the daintiest little collar in the world, seemed to convey the notion of the most perfect refinement. She was nodding to him: but Lugard was still "dark" and indifferent.

"We are to ride to-day, Mr. Richard. Recollect you are engaged to me at two o'clock."

He rose, with an affectation of indifference, to help himself at the sideboard.

"I am so sorry," he said; "but I shall have to go home to barracks to-day."

"Go home," said Diana, "at my festival, and no ride, and the servants' dance to-night? I won't hear of it."

Mr. Lugard senior caught this proposal, and frowned.

"Nor will I," he said, "Miss Diana. Master Richard and I will talk this over after breakfast."

"That won't make any difference," said Lugard, with certainly a want of paternal respect. "I must; the Colonel requires me."

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Mr. Gay with his rather blunt laugh, but he could not restrain himself when he enjoyed a thing. "I know; we understand—sore about yesterday still. I say, Robert, he'll have you out before he has done with you."

Lugard coloured. "I don't understand," he said; "I want to have no one out."

"O, you stay here," said his father curtly. "I wish you, and I want you. I'll settle it with the Colonel. These are officers' excuses," he added, lifting up the jalousies from his fine teeth; "they are always 'on guard' when they want it."

"Ha, post!" said Mr. Gay. "A heavy bag this morning."

Again Mr. Chewton distributes the letters with exquisite propriety and neatness, as though he had been brought up to being a sorter from his childhood. Everybody is busy in a moment.

"I declare," said Mr. Gay, "here's news from the borough."

Everyone looked.

"Poor old Hodges! Well, I am so sorry."

"O, papa!" said Diana, with the teapot suspended in the air from sympathy; "not dead!—poor old man!"

"As good as dead, I fear, my child. Yes, here it's all, from his nephew at Vichy. Got a stroke when taking the waters,—can only last a few months. Poor Hodges!—a true gentleman and a good fellow."

Lord Bellman had been listening, with eyes raised from off his own letter, with some eagerness.

"Can't last long? Then you'll have an election here."

There was a pause.

"Do you know what, my lord," said Mr. Gay—"that makes the Freeman estate something more valuable than it was a week ago. I put in poor Hodges; but Freeman had gone to pieces then. He could always put in his man—always."

"So Lord Bellman," said Diana, "can put in his man. O, but I am so sorry for poor Mr. Hodges."

"He often had you on his knee, popsy. But come," said Mr. Gay, dropping his voice, "there's a chance for our young politician, Master Chimeleigh."

"I was thinking of that—the very thing! But, you see, it's so

awkward; it comes too soon. Chimeleigh must go abroad, and refit for a couple of years. And if your friend resigns or dies, he could not come back. I'll talk with you after breakfast in the study."

Mrs. Bligh had been listening eagerly. Her dark eyes quickened with intelligence as they rose from the table. She went over to Lord Bellman.

"I hope Robert was of some use," she said. "He has a wonderful head about such matters—in real property, as he calls it—and I am sure, even in this Freeman-estate business, he could give a hint that might be useful."

"God bless me, yes! I have all the papers here; and those lawyers are such rogues! But really you are too kind. He is a young man of remarkable ability: he surprises me for his years."

"An old woman like me," said Mrs. Bligh abstractedly, "is privileged to talk about her hobby. He is my hobby: he will cut a figure one of these days. I have put by a little money to help him in a way he don't know of. No lawyer gets on now without a seat in parliament."

"Ah, yes," said the peer, starting; then, looking at her steadily, "By the way—"

Mr. Gay's hand was on his arm. "Now, my lord, at your service. A cigar in my study, where we shall be most comfortable."

His lordship looked again at her irresolutely, and then went with his friend. He enjoyed his cigar in the study for nearly an hour, and then went to his room. Meanwhile, Mr. Gay, with an excited face, went tramping through the house, asking those he met, "Where's Bligh?—where's Bligh's mother?" At last he met them. "Come here, both of you," he said. "A bit of news, in confidence, that will warm the cockles of your heart. What do you say to Master Bligh's becoming a senator, eh?—too busy, eh? But mum's the word. It's all with his lordship. Hush, hush, now! There's Chimeleigh going to be sent abroad to be tinkered up; and if a smart, clever fellow could be got—discreet, and all that—why, in two or three years he might win a name and character, and end solicitor-general. Such things have happened before now."

Mrs. Bligh's eyes sparkled. "This is kind. Why, this is the very opening we were wishing for."

Robert Bligh was reflecting. "It is very kind," he said; "but as to principles, I am afraid that mine and Lord Bellman's—"

"Absurdity!" said his mother, with brows contracting. "There is time enough for all that."

"To be sure," said Mr. Gay. "Put your principles in your pocket, my dear fellow. But nothing's decided. I only give you the hint—you must work it."

When he was gone, Mrs. Bligh turned almost fiercely on her son. "Surely you have a name for wit and sense, and are not going to

raise such stupid points as those! For God's sake, I conjure you, be rational, and, as that man said, put your principles in your pocket until someone asks to see them. You go to Lord Bellman straight, and say, 'My lord, I regret my principles prevent my being a member for your borough,' and what will he say? 'My good sir, I am sorry too; but really I wasn't thinking of you.' How would you look *then*? But I hope, my dear boy, we are not to have any follies about political honour, and all that, in these days, when everyone is allowed to play fast-and-loose in such matters. Be as honourable and true as you like in private, like a gentleman; but in these wretched politics—no, no."

Her son was silent. She saw she had produced an effect. "My dear, clever boy," she said, taking his arm, "how proud I was—how I admired you yesterday! You followed out all your poor old woman's instructions to the letter. The girl is thinking of you. I know girls. She will have a romantic interest in you all the days of her life—her preserver. God bless you!—and may I live to see it."

During these hours Mr. Lugard senior had been a little restless, and even nervous. He had been unfortunately placed at the end of the table, and could not well "catch" the election news that was being talked of so far away; but when Lord Bellman came from the study with a specially pompous air, feeling himself now, indeed, about to possess the true touchstone of territorial influence, he met him in the hall, talked a few moments, and then went out with him for a stroll in the garden.

Diana, when breakfast was over, went up to Dick Lugard with the demure, half-guilty manner which sat so well upon her. "You are not going away from us?" she said. "We should be all so sorry."

"That is all very well," said Mr. Lugard. "Much they would miss me."

"I don't know about that," said Miss Diana innocently. "I can only guess. But *I* wish you to stay."

"I suppose I shall have to do so," said he; "and you know that I don't choose to get up a row with my father, who has his reasons, whatever they are."

"I know them," said Diana smiling.

Lugard coloured. "You do? No, you can't."

"But I do. He is thinking of that seat in parliament. And do you know," added she, with great wisdom, "I think it would be a very nice thing; and O, what fun to have *you* for our member! I should ask you for ever so many places—I should indeed."

Lugard was growing eager. "Ah, that indeed!—that would be something. Was that what they were talking of at breakfast? I wonder would Lord Bellman do it, though? Dear me, what a thing it would be! I could always have leave of absence from that odious regiment."

"Yet you were so anxious to get back there this morning," said Diana with fresh innocence.

"My dear Miss Diana, forgive me. I have been unwell; I have been sulky. Yes; I saw my governor and Lord Bellman going to walk together. They are plotting that, I am sure. The only thing is, hat—" and his mouth began to look sour.

"What?" said she anxiously.

"The wise man—your preserver—our friend Syntax, who seems now the centre of all attraction, since he put off in his boat to save you. Ha, ha!"

Diana smiled. "You can't forgive him that."

"No," said Lugard, now in good humour, "because I can see he takes airs on it; and I can't forgive myself for not being sharper and more wide awake. Come, now, you *know* he is a sober, book-learning fellow, and that I could buy and sell him in the world?"

"O, you mustn't abuse him *now*," said Miss Diana with infinite coquetry; "I can't have it. I am to be eternally obliged to him, as I owe him my life."

"Exactly," said Lugard impetuously; "and such an obligation would make me loathe it perpetually. Depend on it, he will keep you in mind of it. Yet," said he despondingly, "the slow tortoise always wins. I am the hare, and will be made a hare. Perhaps they will make *him* a member. I shouldn't be at all surprised if he took that into his head, and used your interest with the lord. You know you are now, as you say, under an eternal obligation to him, and must do everything for him."

"O, not at all," said Miss Diana, tossing her head. "Dear, no."

"And yet, what would I not give to be in parliament!" said Lugard, with a very natural enthusiasm. Suddenly he turned round,— "There is that girl, Miss Crowder. What a handsome thing she is! Such a fine creature! I admire Kitty—I do indeed. I must go and talk to her."

And he went off, leaving Diana a little mystified by the change. But she thought very often, with pity, of his natural burst of enthusiasm, and before long had devised a little scheme to benefit him.



MUSIC AND MEMORY

"MORE Music!" cried the Count. He could not sleep;
He heard the heaving of the restless deep
Beneath a thousand stars. A troubled sprite
Was in the ocean all that moonless night,
And dashed the sable spray with constant roar
Up to the palace windows. "Strive no more
To bury thy sweet face in dreamful down!"
He said. "Up! braid thee with an orange crown,
And let the sea-breeze kiss thy bright brown eyes,
And give me Music. Perfect beauty dies;
But Music, breathing from the sunny south,
Like ice-cold fountains 'mid Arabian drouth,
Lives on for evermore, from ruddy mouth to mouth."

She sang: along fair Hadria's marble verge
Not sweeter is the murmur of the surge;
Not sweeter, when the shadows come and go
On forest-margins in the sunset glow,
Is the light melody of wind and bird.
With bright eyes eloquent, Count Florian heard—
Heard the rich utterance of those loving lips,
The conquest of those dainty finger-tips,
And dreamily remembered happy times,
When, underneath ancestral elms and limes,
That gentle voice had blended with the summer chimes.

O Memory, what pictures rest on thee,
Like fairy columns on the Italian sea!
The old sweet days of merry youth go by,
As shoots the falcon through a summer sky,
Swift pilgrim of the air; but evermore
Their spectres dance upon the darker shore
Of the weary after-time. The flashing stream,
Where through thick alders rapid eddies gleam;
The boat upon the shore; the fresh-mown lawn;
The feeding pheasants and the playmate fawn;
The half-ripe lips, and budding breasts, and eyes
Just a shade darker than the summer skies,
Of some sweet child we loved, upon our dreams arise.

MORTIMER COLLIN

BELGRAVIA

FEBRUARY 1868

DEAD-SEA FRUIT

J. Habrel

BY THE AUTHOR OF "LADY AUDLEY'S SECRET," ETC.

CHAP. XIX. OUT OF THE WORLD.

Arrival of Harold Jerningham disturbed the even tenor of life at the bailiff's cottage, albeit he earnestly entreated there might range in his old friend's existence. Theodore de Bergerac's hospitality was Arabian; and he would have slaughtered his favourite Newfoundland if Mr. Jerningham had hinted an desire for *pâté de foie de chien*. He altered his dinner-hour at six o'clock to seven, in accordance with the habits of his guest; took pains to order such refined and delicate repasts as might be chosen by a Lucullus in reduced circumstances. His cook, an old Frenchwoman, who had lived with him ever since he had a house of his own; and for a fricassed chicken, an omelette *herbes*, a cup of coffee, or a batch of pistolets white as snow as a thistledown, old Nanon was prepared to enter herself in a part of the universe.

"N'vous dérangez, donc pas, petite amour," she said to Helen, when the lady expressed some misgiving on the subject of Mr. Jerningham's dinners; "nous avons toujours les vaches et les poulets; avec de quoi servir un dîner au lord maire. Et puis pour le café: c'est comme je l'ai fait pour madame la mère de monsieur, dans le temps. C'était elle qui disait toujours, 'Il n'y a que Nanon qui fait le bon café;' et puis elle se meurt, la bonne dame, et puis, il y avait le lord, et monsieur me dit, 'Nanon, adieu, je m'en vais;' et puis elle pleuré, et puis—"

There was no end to Nanon's "et puis."

"C'est une espèce de puits qui n'a point de fond," said M. de Bergerac. When his daughter repeated to him some of the old woman's idle twaddlings.

It was some years since Mr. Jerningham had been to Greenlands, and in the past his visits had been of the briefest.

"Thou art always as one that falls from the heavens," said M. de Bergerac.

This time, however, it seemed as if the restless demon that ruled Jerningham's existence was in some manner exorcised. The master of Greenlands took up his abode in those snug bachelor rooms on the ground-floor of the mansion, which he preferred to the statelier apartments above. There had crept upon the old house a silence and solemnity almost as profound as the mystic silence which reigned in the palace of the Sleeping Beauty, and not even the coming of the master could break the awful spell. By night and by day the doors shut with a clang that might have sounded in the Castle of Udolpho. The catacombs of subterranean Rome are more cheerful than the great stone entrance-hall; the chamber in which Frederick Barbarossa sat in a charmed sleep, awaiting the summons that was to call him once again to the battle-field, was not more appalling than the great dining-room, where the shutters were seldom opened, and where the pictured images of departed Jerninghams looked ghostlike in the gloom.

It was only natural, therefore, that Mr. Jerningham should prefer the pleasant, home-like rooms in the bailiff's cottage. Considered as a habitation only, the cottage was much more pleasant than the great house; and at the cottage Mr. Jerningham enjoyed the society that was of all mortal companionship most agreeable to him. With Theodore de Bergerac there was always some new subject for discussion; and the theme which employed the quiet days of the *savant* had a keen interest for Harold Jerningham. The Frenchman might ride his hobby as hard as he pleased without inflicting weariness upon Mr. Jerningham, who in general society affected the tone and manner of a gentlemanly martyr.

He spent all his evenings at the cottage, after contriving to occupy himself somehow or other during the day; for this most selfish of men was too well-bred to intrude upon his friend's studious hours. It was only between six and seven o'clock that Mr. Jerningham made his appearance in the little drawing-room, where he generally found Helen alone with her books and work, with the ponderous limbs of the Newfoundland stretched luxuriously upon the hearth at her feet.

The half-hour before dinner was by no means disagreeable to the master of Greenlands, nor was it unpleasant to Helen. Jerningham the irresistible had not lost the charm of manner that had won him renown in that modern Hôtel de Rambouillet, to whose saloons all that was brightest in the regions of intellect lent its light; and amidst whose guests, silent and inscrutable as a shadow, passed that exiled prince whose voice now rules the Western world. Mr. Jerningham had acquired the art of conversation among the best men of his day, and he talked very well. Subdued in all things, he pleased without effort,

and was instructive without the taint of dogmatism. He discussed a subject with interest, but he never argued. That war of words which some people call conversation was detestable to him.

Helen was unversed in the hateful art of argument, and she was the most delightful, the most sympathetic of listeners. She had read just enough to make her a good listener. There was no subject you could touch of which she did not know something, and about which she did not languish to know more. She was not unpleasantly demonstrative of her interest in your discourse, nor did she cut you down in the middle of a sentence from the desire to prove herself your equal in wisdom; but every now and then, by some apposite remark or well-aimed question, she demonstrated her interest in your discourse, her perfect appreciation of your meaning.

"If my wife had been like this girl, my marriage would have been a turning-point in my life," Harold Jerningham said to himself, very dully, after one of these pleasant half-hours before dinner.

After that first interview between the two men, no more was said about Eustace Thorburn. To the secretary Mr. Jerningham was unutterably polite, preserving always that tone of the grand seigneur which marks difference of rank, and yet is not the assumption of superiority; a manner that seems to say "We are born of different races, and, unhappily, no condescension on my part can bring us any nearer to each other." It was the manner of Louis the Great to Molière or Racine. But a very close observer might have discovered that the master of Greenlands liked neither the secretary's presence nor the secretary himself. He talked to him a little now and then; for he was his worst a gentleman, and could not insult a dependant; and he listened courteously to the young man's talk. But he rarely pursued any subject that seemed a favourite with Mr. Thorburn; and on rare occasions when Eustace warmed with the excitement of some argument between himself and his employer, and talked with unusual warmth, Mr. Jerningham betrayed some slight weariness.

"Do you not find that young man insufferable with his rhapsodies about Homer and Æschylus?" he said to Helen one evening. But the young lady declared her sympathies with Mr. Thorburn, and this time without blushes or confusion whatsoever.

There is a calm sweet peace that attends the monotony of a happy life, in which doubt and bewilderment of mind are unknown. On that first day of Mr. Jerningham's return, Helen had been just a little embarrassed in her conversation with the unexpected guest; hence the blushes and confusion that had accompanied her mention of Eustace Thorburn. But now she had no more restraint in talking of the secretary with Mr. Jerningham than when she talked of him with her mother. Harold saw this, and began to fancy that he had been mistaken. There might be no love-affair between these young people after all. He was very willing to think that it was so. "I should be sorry to see

Helen de Bergerac waste her regard upon that pedantic young prig," he said to himself.

Now most assuredly Eustace Thorburn was neither prig nor pedant; but in his own tranquil manner Mr. Jerningham was a good hater, and he had taken it into his head to hate this young man. The prejudice was perhaps not entirely unnatural, since Eustace was in some manner a protégé of Laurence Desmond's.

Happily for the secretary, this unprovoked dislike was yet unknown to him. He was no sycophant, to languish for a rich man's friendship; and he had never studied Mr. Jerningham's looks or tones so closely as to discover the state of that gentleman's feelings. There was, indeed, no room in his mind for any consideration of Mr. Jerningham's thoughts or feelings. He was a poet, and he was in love, and he was happy; happy, in spite of the lurking consciousness that there might come a sudden end to his happiness.

Yes, he was happy—calmly, completely happy; and it is just possible that this very fact was irritating to Mr. Jerningham, who was a creature of whims and fancies, capricious and exacting as a woman. Had he not lived a womanish, self-indulgent life, eminently calculated to render the best and bravest of men something less than manly? Mr. Jerningham had chosen his position in life, and had never outstepped it. In the great opera of existence he had played only one part, and that was the rôle of the lover—the false, the fickle, the devoted, the disdainful, the jealous, the exacting—what you will—but always the same part in the same familiar drama; and now that he was too old for the character, he felt that he had no further use in life, and that for him the universe must henceforward be a blank.

He felt this always, but never with a pang so keen as that which smote him when Eustace Thorburn's freshness and enthusiasm marked the depth of his own gentlemanly hopelessness. For the last fifteen years of his life he had kept himself carefully aloof from young men, holding the youth of his generation as an inferior species, something lower than his dog, infinitely below his horse. He saw young men from afar off at his club, and on those rare occasions when he condescended to appear in society, and it seemed to him that they were all alike, and all equally inane. The only clever young men he had ever met were older in feeling than himself, and more wicked, with the wickedness of the Orleans regency as distinguished from the wickedness of the Augustan age it followed, the decadence from a Lauzun to a Rions, from the stately saloons of Versailles to the *luxe effréné* of the Palais Royal.

But, behold, here was a young man who was intellectual and not cynical, learned and not a scoffer, ambitious without conceit, enthusiastic without pretence. Here was a young man whom Harold Jerningham admired in spite of himself, and whose virtues and graces inspired in his breast a feeling that was terribly like envy.

"Is it his happiness or his youth that I envy him?" Mr. Jerningham asked himself when he tried to solve the mystery of his own sentiments with regard to this matter. "His youth surely; for the other word is only a synonyme for youth. Yes, if I am angry with his obtrusive brightness and hopefulness, I suppose it is because I see him in full possession of that universal heritage which I have wasted. He is young, and life is all before him. How will he spend his ten talents, I wonder? Will he turn them into small change, and squander them in fashionable drawing-rooms, as I squandered mine? or will he invest them in some grand undertaking where they will carry interest till the end of time? Helen tells me he is to be a poet. I have seen his lighted window shining between the bare black branches when I have been restless and prowled in the park after midnight. Ah, what delight to be three-and-twenty, with a spotless name, a clear conscience, a good digestion, and to be able to sit up late on a winter's night to scribble verses! I daresay his fire goes out sometimes, and he writes on, supremely unconscious, and fancying himself Homer. Happy youth!"

A perfectly idle man is naturally the subject of strange whims and caprices; for that saying of Dr. Watts, about the work that Satan supplies to the idle, is as true as if it had been composed by Plato or Seneca. It must surely have been from very *désœuvrement* that Mr. Jerningham wasted so much of his life at the cottage, and devoted so much of his leisure to the study of Eustace Thorburn as a member of the human family, and Eustace Thorburn in his relation to the student's daughter. Certain it is that he bestowed as much of his attention upon the affairs of these young people as he could well have done had he been the appointed guardian of Helen de Bergerac's peace. Closely as he studied these young persons, he could not arrive at any definite conclusion about them. Helen's bright, changeful face told so many different stories; and the countenance of the secretary was almost as bright and changeful.

Sweet though the charms of friendship must always be to the jaded spirit, Mr. Jerningham was not altogether happy in his intercourse with the family at the bailiff's cottage. He found pleasure there, and he dallied with the brief glimpses of happiness, loth to lose the brightness of those transient rays; but he found pain far keener than the pleasure, and every day when he went to his old friend's house he told himself this visit should be the last.

But when the next day came, the outlook over life's desert seemed more than ever dark and dreary; so he lingered a little longer by the cool waters of the green oasis.

CHAPTER XX.

MRS. JERNINGHAM IS PHILANTHROPIC.

MR. DESMOND took the earliest opportunity of carrying out his resolution in the matter of Lucy Alford, otherwise Miss St. Albans. He dined at the Hampton Villa within a few days of his visit to Whitecross-street, and entertained Mrs. Jerningham with the story of his tutor's daughter, her hopes and her struggles. He told the simple little history very pleasantly, and not without a touch of pathos, as he sat by the pretty fireplace in the Hampton drawing-room, after a New-year's dinner *à trois* with Mrs. Colton and her niece. The dinner had been a success, the snug circular table crowned with a monster pine of Emily's own growing; and the châtelaine herself was in a peculiarly amiable mood.

The most delightful of dragons had a habit of dozing after dinner, which was just a little hazardous for the fruit under her guardianship.

She always awoke from her slumbers to declare that she had heard every word of the conversation, and had enjoyed it amazingly; but this declaration was taken with certain qualifications. Seated in her comfortable nook by the low Belgian mantelpiece, half in the shadow of the projecting marble, half in the red light of the fire, she was at once the image of repose and propriety—a statue of comfort draped in that neutral-tinted silk which is the privilege of middle age.

"Why do you ever ask stupid people to meet me, Emily?" asked Laurence, when he had finished Lucy Alford's story. "See how happy we are alone together. It is so nice to be able to talk to you *sans gêne*, with the sense that one is really holding converse with one's best and truest friend."

Mrs. Jerningham's flexible lips were slightly contracted as Laurence said this. His tone was just a little too friendly to be pleasing to her.

"You are very good," she said rather coldly, "and I am delighted to find you think my house pleasant this evening. Is your Miss Alford pretty?"

"No, 'my Miss Alford' is not particularly pretty," replied the editor, conscious that the green-eyed monster was not entirely banished from that comfortable paradise; "at least, I suppose not. She is the sort of girl who is usually called interesting. I remember a young man who called all the beauties of the season 'pleasing.' His phraseology contained no warmer epithet. They were all pleasing. I think, without going too far, I may venture to call Miss Alford pleasing."

"She is young, of course?"

"A mere child."

"Indeed! A mere child, like Goethe's Mignon or Hugo's Esmeralda, I suppose?"

This was a very palpable pat from the paw of the green-eyed one; but Mr. Desmond had set his foot upon the ploughshare, and he was not inclined to withdraw from the ordeal because the iron proved a little hotter than he had expected to find it.

"She is not in the least like Mignon. She is a very sensible, reasonable young lady, about eighteen years of age. Now I know that you are dreadfully at a loss for some object upon which to bestow your sympathy, and it has struck me that, with very little trouble to yourself, you might confer much kindness on this friendless girl. She is of gentle blood, of refined rearing; and she is quite alone in the world; for I count her broken-down, drunken father as less than nothing. She is full of innocence, gratitude, and affection; and—"

"Indeed!" exclaimed Mrs. Jerningham. "You appear to have studied her character with considerable attention."

"She is as simple as a child, and reveals her character in half a dozen sentences. Go and see her, Emily; and if you are not pleased and interested, let your first visit be your last."

"And if I should be pleased and interested, what then?"

"Your own heart will answer that question. The girl is a lady, exposed to all the miseries of genteel poverty, disappointed of one theatrical engagement, and not likely to be professionally employed for some months. I think your first impulse will be to bring her home with you. Her youth is fast fading in her miserable home, where there is so much anxiety, so little happiness. You have lamented the emptiness of your life, your inability to be of use to your fellow-creatures—"

"Excuse me, Mr. Desmond, I told you very plainly that I have no taste for philanthropy."

"And I took the liberty to disbelieve you. I am sure you do yourself injustice when you pretend not to be kind and womanly."

"And I am to go about the world adopting casual orphans, or any amiable young persons who happen to be afflicted with disreputable fathers, in order to gratify the charitable instincts of Mr. Desmond, whose last mania is the rescue of pretty actresses from the anxieties and discomforts of their profession?"

"You will do just as you please, Emily," Laurence answered very boldly. "I thought the history of this girl's trials would have interested you. I might have known that you would receive it in your usual spirit."

"And pray what is my usual spirit?"

"A very unpleasant one!"

"Indeed! I am a most objectionable person because I do not rush to the rescue of Miss Lucy Alford, whom you talk of, by the way, as Lucy, *tout court*. Shall I order the brougham, and go in search of your paragon to-night?"

Mrs. Jerningham extended her hand, and made as if she would

ring the bell. Mrs. Colton's slumbers were broken by a faint moaning sound, as of remonstrance.

"I shall never again mention the name of my paragon, Mrs. Jerningham," said Laurence, rising and planting himself with his back to the fireplace; "nor will I ever again ask the smallest favour at your hands. You have a positive genius for aggravation!"

"Thank you very much. It is not given to everyone to be so charming as Miss Alford."

"Good-night, Mrs. Colton," said Laurence, as the image of the proprieties awoke to life, conscious that the atmosphere had changed since she sank to her peaceful slumbers. "I have a little work to do to-night, and must get back to town early."

This awful threat brought Mrs. Jerningham's proud spirit to the dust immediately.

"O no, you are not going away," she exclaimed. "Aunt Fanny is just going to give us some tea—why are those people always so long bringing the tea?—and after tea you shall have as much music as you like, or none, if you like that better. I will go and see your tutor's daughter to-morrow morning, Laurence; and if aunt Fanny and I find her a nice person—nice in the feminine sense of the adjective, *bien entendu*—we will bring her down to stay with us for a few weeks."

After this there was perfect harmony for the rest of the evening. No one could be more gentle, more humble, more charming than Mrs. Jerningham, after she had goaded the man she loved to the verge of madness; but so to goad him was a delight that she could not forego.

Early in the next afternoon the simple inhabitants of Paul's-terrace were electrified by the apparition of a brougham and pair—a brougham, on the box whereof sat two servants clad in subdued and unexceptionable livery—a brougham which even the untutored denizens of Ball's-pond recognised as the very archetype of equipages. A tremendous knock at the door of No. 20, set Lucy's heart beating; a pompous voice asked if Miss Alford was at home; and in the next minute the door of the brougham was opened, and two ladies alighted—ladies whose furs were alone worth a fortune, as the proprietress of No. 20 informed her gossips at the first opportunity.

Lucy's heart fluttered like some frightened bird in a cage, as Mrs. Jerningham advanced to greet her with outstretched hand and pleasant smile. It was long since she had been accustomed to any but the free-and-easy society of the greenroom, where the ladies called her "St. Albans," and the gentlemen "my dear," in no impertinent spirit, but with a fatherly familiarity which had, at first, rather amazed her.

Mrs. Jerningham's carriage, and sables, and elegance, and beauty, were alike startling to her; and this handsome lady was Mr. Desmond's friend! The world in which he lived was inhabited by such people! O, what a vulgar, miserable place Paul's-terrace must have seemed to him! what a loathsome den the prison in which her





Louis Huard, del.

W. L. Thomas, sc.

MRS. JERNINGHAM VISITS LUCY.

father languished, broken-down and desolate! The ex-coach was drinking brandy-and-water, and maundering about great "wines," and patrician bear-fights—the battles of Ursa Major—in the prison-ward, as the girl thought of him, and enjoying life very tolerably after his own fashion.

"Our common friend Mr. Desmond has sent me to call upon you, Miss Alford," said the lady in sables, with much cordiality of tone and manner, and with Lucy's timid hand in her own. "We are to be excellent friends, he tells me; and he has given me such an interesting account of your professional career, and your love for the drama, that I feel already as if I knew you quite intimately. I hope I do not seem altogether a stranger to you."

"O no, indeed," faltered Lucy. "Mr. Desmond told me how kind you are; and I am sure—"

This was all that Miss Alford was capable of saying just yet. Mrs. Jerningham had noted every detail of her appearance by this time, with some touch of that fatal spirit whose influence embittered so much of her life.

"Yes, she is interesting," thought the visitor, "and not exactly pretty; and yet I am not quite convinced of that. Her eyes are very blue and large, and have a tender, earnest look, that is assumed, no doubt, like the rest of her stage tricks; and, I declare, the minx has long black eyelashes. I wonder whether she has dyed them? That rosy little mouth is painted, no doubt, in order to set off her pale complexion, which of course is pearl-powder, so artfully put on that one cannot see it. No doubt these actresses have a hundred secrets of the Rachel kind."

Thus whispered jealousy; and then spoke the milder voice of womanly compassion.

"That brown-merino dress is dreadfully shabby, almost thread-bare about the sleeves; and what a horrible place to live in, with children playing on the door-step, and fowls—actually fowls!—in the area. Poor little thing! she really seems like a lady—shy and gentle, and alarmed by our grandeur."

The voice of compassion drowned the green-eyed one's insidious whisper, and in a very few minutes Mrs. Jerningham had contrived to set Lucy at her ease. She made Miss Alford talk of herself, and her hopes and disappointments, in discoursing whereof Lucy was careful to avoid all mention of the Cat's-meat-man.

"I want you to come and stay a few days with me at Hampton, Miss Alford," said Emily. "You are not looking at all well, and our nice country air will revive you after all your worries.—A week at Hampton would quite set Miss Alford up in the matter of health, wouldn't it, aunt Fanny?"

On this Mrs. Colton, of course, seconded her niece's proposal; but Lucy was evidently at a loss to reply to this flattering invitation.

"It would be most delightful," she murmured. "I cannot thank you sufficiently for your kindness. But I think while papa is—away—I ought not to—"

And here she looked down at her threadbare merino dress, and Mrs. Jerningham divined that there lay the obstacle.

"I shall take no refusal," she said, while Lucy was wondering whether she could enter society in the pink silk she wore for the second act of the *Lady of Lyons*, or the gray moiré-antique—a deceitful and spurious kind of fabric with a cotton back—which she wore for Julia in the *Hunchback*. "I have pledged myself to carry you off to Hampton, and I must keep my word. I will not wait for any preparations in the way of toilette; you must come in the dress you have on, and my maid shall run you up two or three dresses to wear while you are with me. I have a mania for buying bargains, and I have always half a dozen unmade dresses in my wardrobe. It will be a real charity to take them off my hands, and leave me free to buy more bargains. I never can resist that insidious man who assails me, just as I have finished my shopping, with the remark that if I happen to want anything in the way of silks or moirés, he can call my attention to a most valuable opportunity. And I yield to the voice of the tempter, and burden myself with things I don't want."

After this, the question was easily settled. Mrs. Jerningham met all Lucy's difficulties in the pleasantest manner, while Mrs. Colton put in a kind word every now and then; and, encouraged by so much kindness, Lucy yielded. It was agreed that she should write to her father, and pack her little carpet-bag of indispensables between that hour and five o'clock, during which interval the two ladies were to pay their visits, and take their luncheon, while the horses had their two hours' rest, and then return, to convey Miss Alford to Hampton in the brougham.

Lucy felt like a creature in a dream when the archetypal carriage had driven away, and she was left alone to make her arrangements for the visit to Hampton. These were not the first refined and well-bred women she had met, but never before had she been on visiting terms with the proprietress of such sables, or such an equipage, as those possessed by Mrs. Jerningham.

"How good of him to give me such kind friends!" she said to herself. She felt gratefully disposed towards Mrs. Jerningham, but her deepest gratitude was given to Laurence, the benefactor and champion who had sent this lady to her in her hour of difficulty.

She had many little duties to perform before the return of her new friends—little bills to pay, a letter to write to her father, and a post-office order to procure for the same helpless individual. After paying all debts due to landlady and tradesmen, she reserved for herself only one sovereign of the money given her by Laurence Desmond. The rest she sent to the prisoner.

"Do not think me unkind if I ask you to be very careful, dear papa," she wrote. "This money is the last we can expect to receive from Mr. Desmond. He has been more kind than words can express, and I am sure you will feel his kindness as deeply as I do."

And then came a description of the strange lady, the grand carriage, and the invitation that she would fain have refused.

"You must not imagine that I am enjoying myself while you are unhappy, poor dear papa," she continued. "I thought that to refuse Mrs. Jerningham's invitation would seem ungracious to her, and ungrateful to Mr. Desmond; so I am going to Hampton. The train will bring me to town in an hour whenever you wish to see me, and you have only to write one line to me at River Lawn—isn't that a pretty name for a place?—telling me your wish, in order to be immediately obeyed. I have told Mrs. Wilkins that you may return at any moment, and she has promised to make you comfortable in my absence. She seemed awestruck by the sight of Mrs. Jerningham's carriage, and has adopted quite a new tone to me within the last hour. You know how disrespectful she has been lately. I think she suspected that you had been taken to that dreadful place; but the appearance of the carriage and the settlement of her account have quite changed her. I hope you do not sit in draughts, and that you take care to secure a corner near the fire. It almost breaks my heart to think of you sitting in that long dreary room, while I am going away to a pleasant house. It seems almost heartless in me to go; but, believe me, I only do so to avoid offending Mr. Desmond.

"God bless you, dear papa, and help you in your hour of trouble.

"Your ever loving child,

"LUCY."

After this letter to her father, Miss Alford wrote a note to Laurence Desmond, thanking him for his kindness to herself, and putting in a timid little plea for the prisoner in Whitecross-street. By the time these letters were written and posted, and Lucy's modest little carpet-bag packed, the brougham was again a thing of wonder for the inhabitants of Paul's-terrace, more especially wonderful upon this occasion by reason of two flaming lamps, that flashed like meteors upon the darkness of Ball's-pond. Lucy could not help feeling a faint thrill of pride as she stepped into this vehicle, attended to the very door by the obsequious Mrs. Wilkins, who insisted on getting in the way of that grandiose creature in livery whose business it was to open and shut the door of the brougham.

Mrs. Jerningham's bays performed the distance between London and Hampton in about two hours, and during the long drive Lucy told the two ladies a good deal about herself and her father, and the old days in which Laurence Desmond had read for "greats" at Henley. All this she related without egotism, and urged thereto by Emily, who

seemed interested in all Miss Alford had to tell, but most especially interested in her account of Mr. Desmond's reading for honours.

"And was he very industrious?" she asked; "did he work very hard?"

"Well, yes, I believe he read sometimes at night; but I was only nine years old, you know," replied Lucy, "and poor mamma used to send me to bed very early. Mr. Desmond and his two friends used to be on the river nearly all day, sometimes training for boat-races, you know, and sometimes fishing—spinning for jack, I think they used to call it. I am sure we almost lived upon jack, there were so many caught."

"But surely it was not by spinning for jack that Mr. Desmond got his degree?"

"O, no; of course he did read, you know, because he came to Henley on purpose to read. I believe there used to be a great deal of reading done every night after the shutters were shut and the lamps lighted. But Mr. Desmond used to say he could never work well until he had used up his idleness; and he declared that he never felt himself in such good training for cramming Thicksides as after a long day's punting."

"Cramming Thicksides!" cried Mrs. Jerningham in amazement; "what, in mercy's name, did he mean by that?"

"O, Thicksides is the Oxonian name for Thucydides."

"How very charming! And at night, when the lamps were lighted, Mr. Desmond and your father used to cram Thicksides?"

"Yes, and Cicero; the Philippics, you know, and that sort of thing; and all the Greek tragedies, and Demosthenes, and Mill's Logic. I believe Mr. Desmond's friends were both ploughed. Papa said that they were not nearly so clever as he."

"And your papa thinks him very clever, I suppose?"

"Papa says he is one of the best Baliol men; and Baliol is a college where they work very hard, you know."

"Indeed, Miss Alford, I know nothing of the kind."

"I beg your pardon; I only said you know, in a general sense, you know. Papa has often told me what a silly, vulgar habit it is, you know; but I go on saying it in spite of myself."

"It is not such a very grave offence, Lucy. May I call you Lucy, Miss Alford?"

"O, if you please. I should like it much better than for you to call me Miss Alford."

"In that case it shall always be Lucy," replied Mrs. Jerningham kindly; "Lucy is such a pretty name, and suits you admirably."

She was thinking of Wordsworth's familiar lines,

"A creature not too bright or good
For human nature's daily food."

"I am not fit for human nature's daily food," she said to herself.

"I am what the French call *difficile*; not easily pleased by others, never quite satisfied with myself. The circumstances of my life have always been exceptional; but I doubt if I should have been a happy woman under happier circumstances."

The question of how much character may or may not be moulded and influenced by circumstances, was a psychological problem too difficult for Mrs. Jerningham's comprehension. She knew that she was not happy; and there were times when she was inclined to ascribe her unhappiness to some radical defect in her own character, rather than to her exceptional position.

She found herself pleased and interested by Lucy Alford; but she was nevertheless bent on measuring the extent of that young lady's acquaintance with Laurence Desmond.

"I am glad to think that your father considers Mr. Desmond so clever," she said presently, returning to the charge.

"O yes, he is very clever; and as good as he is clever," replied Lucy, with more enthusiasm than was quite agreeable to her questioner.

"You have seen a great deal of him in the course of your life?"

"O yes; I used to be with him and papa a great deal at Henley, in the punt, you know, when I was nine years old. I used to catch flies for them,—blue-bottles, and all sort of flies. It seemed very cruel to the flies, you know; but Mr. Desmond was so kind to me, and I was pleased to be of any use to him."

"And have you seen him very often since you were nine years old?"

"O no, very seldom; never until two or three weeks ago, when papa wrote to ask him for an introduction to a London manager. But in that short time he has been so kind, so good, so generous, so thoughtful, that—"

The rest was expressed by a little choking sob.

"I am glad to think that he is kind and generous and thoughtful," said Mrs. Jerningham very seriously. "He is my friend, Lucy—a very old and intimate friend; and I am more pleased to hear him praised than to hear any praise of myself. Your gratitude for his kindness touches me very deeply."

There was a tone of appropriation in this speech which was felt rather than understood by Lucy. She was conscious that this grand lady of the irreproachable brougham claimed Laurence Desmond for her own, and she began to perceive how frail a link was that accidental association which bound him to herself.

"Laurence has asked me to be your friend, Lucy," continued Mrs. Jerningham, and something that was almost pain smote Lucy's heart as the lady uttered his Christian name for the first time in her hearing. "He has requested me to be your friend and adviser; and it will be a great pleasure to me to obey his wish. Of course it will be much

better for you to accept friendship from me than from him, Lucy. That kind of thing could not go on for ever, you know."

"O, of course not," murmured Lucy. She was too innocent to perceive the real drift of this remark. She thought that Mrs. Jerningham was considering the business entirely from a pecuniary point of view. "Of course I know that Mr. Desmond could not afford to go on helping papa as he has been helping him," she said; "it would be very shameful of us to wish it."

"*You* could not afford to receive money from him any longer, Lucy," returned the voice of worldly wisdom from the lips of Mrs. Jerningham. "It would be a most improper position for you to occupy. In future you must tell me your troubles, and I shall always be glad to help you; but all confidences between you and Mr. Desmond had much better come to an end."

"I do not want to confide in him; that is to say, I do not want to ask favours of him," replied poor Lucy, much distressed by this stern dictum. "But my friendship for him cannot come to an end. I cannot so easily forget his kindness. If I were at the Antipodes, and with no hope ever to see his face again, I should think of him with the same regard and gratitude to my dying day. If I live to be an old, old woman, I shall always think of him as my truest and kindest friend."

"Your grateful feelings are very creditable; but I hope you will not express yourself in that manner to other people, Lucy. You talk in a way that sounds theatrical, and rather bold. A girl of your age ought not to be so very enthusiastic about any gentleman."

"Not when he has been so good, so generous?"

"Not under any circumstances. You may be as grateful as Androcles, or the lion—which was it that was grateful, by the by?—but you need not indulge in that kind of rhapsody; it is not in very good taste."

This was the first time Lucy had heard of taste, in the modern-society sense of the word. She submitted to Mrs. Jerningham's sentence. The voice of a lady admired and respected by Laurence Desmond must be sacred as the voices of Delphos.

The carriage rolled into the shrubberied drive at River Lawn presently, and then Lucy beheld flashing lights, and a vestibule with bright tessellated pavement, and pictures on the walls, and open doors leading into the brightest, prettiest rooms she had ever seen in her life; and in the dining-room was set forth that banquet so dear to the heart of every true woman—a tea-dinner. Quaint old silver tea and coffee service, turquoise-blue cups and saucers, an antique oval tea-tray, a pierced cake-basket that would make a collector's mouth water; substantial fare in the way of tongue and chicken and game-pie, a room adorned as only perfect taste, allied with wealth, can adorn a room, were the things that greeted Lucy Alford's eyes as she looked round her for the first time in her new friend's home. It was scarcely

strange that such a room should seem to her almost like a picture of fairy-land, as contrasted with those dingy lodgings in Ball's-pond, where the last few weeks of her existence had been spent. She thought of her father in his dreary prison-ward, and she could not quite put away from her the feeling that she had no right to be amidst such pleasant surroundings.

CHAPTER XXI.

DECEITFUL ABOVE ALL THINGS.

THE fair river that wound like a broad ribbon of silver through the lands of Harold Jerningham did not flow more evenly than was the course of existence at the bailiff's cottage. M. de Bergerac's great book grew slowly and steadily in bulk, and developed day by day from chaos into form; while Helen's simple life went on, eventless, and purposeless perhaps, if measured by the ordinary standard by which the world measures existence, every hour filled with pleasant occupation, every morning bringing with it some new delight. Her father, her books, her dog, her piano, her birds, her dairy, her poultry-yard,—these were the delights of Helen's life, and these left her no leisure for the ordinary aspirations of young ladyhood. It is not to be supposed that so charming a damsel was neglected or ignored by neighbouring families. Helen had to receive an occasional morning visitor, and was obliged sometimes to withdraw the declaration that she never went out, in favour of some friendly matron hunting pretty girls for a garden-party, or presentable pianistes for a musical evening. But she went out very seldom. Her home-life was inexpressibly dear to her, and an evening's absence from the beloved father's side seemed like a break in her existence. What could people give her at garden-parties or musical evenings that was equal to her father's society?

"I meet no one who can talk like you, papa," she said on returning blooming and radiant from a neighbouring mansion, not elated because she had been enjoying herself especially abroad, but because she was pleased to come home. "Why should I take the trouble to put on this white dress, and crush all the little flounces that poor Nanon insists upon ironing with her own hands, in order to hear people say stupid things, when I am always so much happier with you in this dear old room? I am afraid I must be a blue-stocking, papa, for I cannot enjoy the perpetual talk about operas and morning-concerts, and new curates and croquet-parties, that I hear whenever I go out. I have no genius for croquet, you see, papa; and I am always being croqueted into some ignominious position by the good players. There seems to be no such thing as generosity in croquet. It is an epitome of life, I suppose. Self-interest governs every stroke of the mallet; and if your dearest friend is on the opposite side, you do your utmost to croquet her to the very antipodes."

It was very pleasant to Eustace Thorburn to discover that the

country society had so little fascination for his employer's daughter. It had been anguish to him to see her borne away to halls of dazzling light, or paradisaic croquet-grounds, whither he might not follow. He loved her with a young man's love—pure, honest, and enthusiastic. The depth and intensity, the abnegation of self, which constitutes the religion of love, were as yet only latent in his breast. It was the summer-morning of life, and the bark that bore the lovers onward upon the enchanted waters was floating with the stream. The hour of the turning tide would be the hour to test the strength of Eustace Thorburn's devotion. At present all was smooth and bright and happy, and the affection which these young people felt for one another grew imperceptibly in the hearts of each. Helen did not know why her life seemed to her so perfect in its calm happiness. Eustace believed that he was battling manfully with his own weakness, and that every day brought him nearer to the hour of victory.

"I am resigned to the thought that Helen de Bergerac may never be my wife," he said to himself; "and yet I am almost happy."

He might have said, quite happy; for a happiness more perfect than any man can hope to experience twice in his life made his new home a paradise for him. He was happy because, unknown to himself, he still hoped; he was happy because he was still the friend and companion of his idol.

"What is to become of me when my task here is finished?" he asked himself. But this was a line of thought that he dared not pursue; beyond that bright home all was darkness.

M. de Bergerac looked on at the little Arcadian comedy, and wondered. The scholar was too unskilled in the study of youthful hearts to read the mysterious cipher in which the secret thoughts of lovers are written. He saw that the young people were very well pleased with each other's society, but he saw no more; nor did he disturb himself by doubts or apprehensions. Harold Jerningham contemplated the same comedy with angry feelings in his breast; he envied these young people the brightness of their morning. The feeling was mean and detestable. Mr. Jerningham knew this, and hated himself; but the bitter envy of youth and happiness was not to be banished from his heart. "The heart of man is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked," cries the Prophet; and if it was even so with the people of God, what must it be with such a man as Mr. Jerningham, who had never recognised any other god than himself, and the fancy or the passion of the hour, and who at his best had known for his only law that vague instinct—half pride, half shame—which bad men call honour?

It is quite impossible that a man who performs no duty and cherishes no ambition can escape that fatal decline which leads to the region of moral darkness. Harold Jerningham had cherished some faint hope of distinction at the beginning of his life. He had made

venture in the lottery, and had drawn, not exactly a blank, but a number so infinitely beneath his expectation that it seemed to him as worthless.

There had been a time when the master of Greenlands, fresh from a successful university career, and steeped to the very lips in Greek and Latin, had fancied himself a poet. The dream, which was so sweet to Eustace Thorburn, had shed its glamour over his pathway. Even the laurels of fame had come to him in some small measure, but not that laurel crown which he had hoped to win; so he shrugged his shoulders, and turned his back on his critics, and wandered away to the sunny lands where his life itself is unwritten poetry. Young Jerningham of Brazenose was a very brilliant young man, but he lacked that divine spark, that touch of the superhuman, which men call genius. He had not the fire, the intellect, the energy, the passion of that young lordling who answered his contemptuous critics, not with *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*—it was only the *tour de force* of a pamphleteer—but with *Childe Harold*, the inspired verse of a poet supremely unconscious of public opinion, under the sway of a possession no less potent than that which gave a prophetic voice to Cassandra.

Mr. Jerningham had discovered that a handsome face, a manner eminently successful in feminine society, an intimate acquaintance with classic literature, a fine fortune, and some ambition for literary fame, did not make a Byron; and to be anything less than Byron seemed to him synonymous with failure. "I am like the tiger," he said to himself, and Byron. "If I do not succeed with the first spring, I go back howling to my cave." Mr. Jerningham was also like the tiger. He went back to his cave, and remained there. "Cæsar or nothing," he had said to himself when he made his venture. The result was nothing.

The fact that he had thus aspired and failed, may have had some slight influence upon his feelings on the subject of Eustace Thorburn. The young man's ambitious hopes were never paraded. It was only by the glow upon his face, and the warmth of his words when he praised the poets of the past, that he unconsciously revealed the bent of his mind. For the rest, Mr. Jerningham heard a great deal about a young poet's hopes and dreams from Helen, who was his confidante and adviser.

"He helps me so kindly with all my studies, that it is the least he can do to be interested in his poems," Helen said, as if she felt herself bound to apologise for the warmth of her interest in this subject. He is writing a long poem something in the style of Mrs. Browning's *Arcturion Leigh*, only with a much prettier story for the groundwork; and he has read me little bits—such noble verses! And then he writes occasional short poems, just as the fancy strikes him. He has had almost all of these published in the magazines. Perhaps you would like to see them?"

Helen rose as if to go in search of the magazines, but Mr. Jerningham stopped her with a hasty gesture of deprecation.

"Please spare me the short poems, my dear Helen," he said. "I have given up reading my Horace and Catullus, since I have passed the poetic age. Don't ask me to read magazine verses."

Helen looked very much disappointed.

"I daresay two thousand years hence learned men will be disputing about a false quantity in one of Mr. Thorburn's poems," said her father. "Not every poet can hope to be thought great in his own century. Do you remember that preface of Webster's to the *White Devil*, in which he names all the dramatists of the day, and last of all, 'without wrong so to be named, the right happy and copious industry of master Shakespeare'?"

"Yes," answered Mr. Jerningham. "I don't think either Shakespeare or Molière had the faintest suspicion that he was to be immortal. It is only once in a thousand years that a poet drinks the cup of triumph that Byron drained to the very lees. He tasted the lees, and died with the bitterness of them on his lips. He might have tasted nothing but lees had he lived longer. For one man who dies too soon, a hundred die too late. There is a golden opportunity for effective death in every man's career, but few are wise enough to seize it. If the first Napoleon had fallen at Austerlitz, he would have taken high rank among the demi-gods. De Quincey suggests that even Commodus might have made a shred of character for himself by dying immediately after a triumphant display of his genius as a toxophilite."

Mr. Jerningham's distaste for his friend's secretary did not keep him away from the cottage. He came at all times and seasons, and if his only possibility of happiness had been found in that house, he could not have seemed less inclined to leave it, or less eager to return to it. Weeks, and even months, passed, and he still remained in England, spending a few days every now and then at the bijou house in Park-lane, but making Greenlands his head-quarters. Capricious in all his movements, he came when he pleased, and departed when he pleased. Theodore de Bergerac loved and trusted him, as it was his nature to love and trust those whom he thought worthy of his friendship. The welcome that awaited him was always equally cordial. He had never pictured to himself so calm a haven.

"If I could spend the rest of my life here, I might die a good Christian," he said to himself; until little by little he came to understand that those feelings which made the bailiff's cottage so pleasant to him were not altogether Christianlike.

He hated Eustace Thorburn. He envied him his youth, his hopefulness, his chances of future distinction; above all, he envied him the love of Helen de Bergerac. Yes, there was the sting. Youth, hope, chances of future glory, might all have been given to this young man,

and Harold Jerningham would have let him go by with a careless sneer. But Eustace Thorburn had more than these gifts; he had the love of a pure and bright young creature, whose purity and brightness had touched the heart of this middle-aged sybarite as it had never been touched before. His fancy, his vanity, his pride of conquest, had been the motive power to sustain him in bygone victories. He had dreamed his dreams, and had awakened suddenly to see fancy's radiant vision vanish before the chill gray light of reality's cheerless dawn.

But this time the dream was fairer than any of those old forgotten visions. This time the heart of the man, and not the fancy of the poet only, was touched and subjugated. It was many years since the master of Greenlands had bade farewell to the follies and delusions of youth, and he had believed the farewell eternal. And now, in a moment, unbidden, dreams, delusions, and folly returned to hold him with fatal sway; and in his self-communings he confessed that it was no common sentiment which made Helen's presence so delightful, and no common prejudice that rendered Eustace Thorburn so odious.

He confessed to himself as much as this; and knowing this, he lingered at Greenlands, and came day after day to sit beside his friend's hearth, or loiter in his friend's garden. And why should he not snatch the brief hours of happiness which yet remained for him—the Indian summer of his life?

"I am an old man," he said to himself; "at least, in the eyes of this girl I must seem an old man. She will never know that I regard her with any warmer sentiment than a fatherly kind of friendship. She will dream her own dreams, and think her own thoughts, unconscious of her influence on mine. And by and by, after a few months of sentimental flirtation, she will marry this young secretary, or some other man, young, self-satisfied, good-looking, empty-headed, and utterly unable to understand how divine a treasure the fates have bestowed upon him."

With such philosophy as this did Mr. Jerningham trifle with his conscience, or rather that vague sense of honour which stood him instead of conscience. But there were times when philosophy gave poor comfort to the soul of this unprincipled egotist, who until now had never known what it was to set a seal upon his lips or a curb upon his will. There were hours of envious rage, of dark remorse, of vain passionate broodings on the things that might have been; there were hours in which the spirits of evil claimed Harold Jerningham for their own, and walked about with him, and hovered around his bed as he slept, and made his dreams hideous with shapeless horrors. He looked back upon his early dreams, and laughed at their folly. He was like that French libertine who, in writing of his youthful caprices, said, "My hour for loving truly and profoundly had not yet come." That fateful hour which comes to every man had come to him too late.

What special charm in this girl enthralled his mind and melted his

heart? He did not know. It could scarcely be her beauty, for his life had been spent amongst beautiful women, and his heart had long ago become impervious to the fascination of a fair and noble face. It may have been her innocence, her youth, her gentleness, that had subdued this world-weary cynic—the poetic charm of her surroundings, the sweet repose which seemed a part of the very atmosphere she breathed.

Yes, in this youthful purity there lurked the potent charm that held Harold Jerningham. The girl, with her sweet confiding face and pure thoughts, the rustic life, the perfume of Arcadia, composed the subtle charm that had intoxicated Mr. Jerningham's senses. What is so delightful as novelty to an idle, *blasé* creature of the Jerningham type? The life at Greenlands had all the charm of novelty; it was fresh, piquant, exhilarating, because of its very innocence; and as it had never been in Mr. Jerningham's creed to deny himself any pleasure, he lingered at the neglected house in which his father and mother had died. He spent his evenings at the bailiff's cottage, and left the issue to fate.

"She will never know how tenderly her father's old friend loves her," he said to himself; "and at the worst I may prevent her throwing herself away upon an adventurer."

CHAPTER XXII.

DANIEL MAYFIELD'S COUNSEL.

THE great book and his own studies afforded Mr. Thorburn ample occupation for all his days and nights. If his days had been twice as long as they were, in his days the young man would have found work for all his hours. He was very ambitious, and he had that passionate love of learning for its own sake, which marks the predestined scholar. But with all a Bentley or a Porson's delight in the niceties of a Greek verb or the use of a preposition, he was as free from pedantry as from every other affectation. In the garden, on the river, by the piano, or on the croquet lawn, he was a match for the most empty-headed bachelor in Berkshire; and if he played croquet on mathematical principles, he was careful to keep that fact to himself. He had a knack of doing everything well, and even Mr. Jerningham was fain to admit that he was in tone and manner irreproachable. Never was the boyish candour of light-hearted youth more pleasantly blended with the self-possession of accomplished manhood. Grave and earnest when good taste required that he should be serious; in his moments of expansion full of enthusiasm and vivacity; always deferential to superior age and attainments, yet entirely without sycophancy; profoundly respectful in his intercourse with women,—Eustace Thorburn was a man who made friends for himself unconsciously.

"I am very proud of my daughter," M. de Bergerac said to Harold Jerningham one day, when they had been talking of the secretary;

"but I should have been prouder still of such a son as that young man."

"I have no passion for pattern young men," replied Mr. Jerningham. "I daresay your model secretary is very amiable. You pay him a salary for being amiable, you see, and he occupies a very pleasant position in your house. But I cannot quite understand how you could bring yourself to admit a stranger to the very bosom of your family. The arrangement reminds me a little of those curious advertisements one sees in the *Times*. A family who occupy a house that is too large for its requirements invite a gentleman engaged in the City during the day to share the delights of their too spacious mansion; and they promise him cheerful society—imagine the horror implied in pledging yourself to be cheerful all the year round for a gentleman engaged in the City!—and the gentleman comes to be welcomed to the arms of the family that knows about as much of his antecedents, or his qualities of head and heart, as if he were an inhabitant of the planet Mars. Now it seems to me that you receive Mr. Thorburn very much on the same principle."

"Not at all. I had Mr. Desmond's credentials for my secretary's character."

"And how much does Mr. Desmond know of your secretary?"

"I can scarcely tell you that. I know that Desmond's letter of recommendation was very satisfactory, and that the result has justified the letter."

"And you do not even know who and what the young man's father was?"

"I do not; but I would pledge my life upon the young man's honesty of purpose, and I am not inclined to trouble myself about his father."

This conversation was eminently provoking to Mr. Jerningham. He had of late found himself tormented by an irritating curiosity upon the subject of Eustace Thorburn. He wanted to know who and what this man was whom he envied with so iniquitous an envy, whom he hated with a hatred so utterly unprovoked. Had he good blood in his veins, this young adventurer, who carried himself with an easy grace that could scarcely have been given to a plebeian? Mr. Jerningham was a Conservative in the narrowest sense of the word, and did not believe in nature's nobility. He watched Eustace Thorburn with cold critical eyes, and was fain to admit that in this young man there were no traces of vulgar origin.

"And they say he is like me," Mr. Jerningham said to himself. "Was I ever as handsome as that, as bright, as candid in tone and frank in manner? I think not. Life was too smooth for me when I was a young man, and prosperity spoiled me."

Mr. Jerningham looked back at the days of his youth, and remembered *how prosperous they had been*, and was fain to confess to

himself that it might have been better for him if Fortune had been less lavish of her gifts. Absolute power is a crucial test that few men can stand. Absolute power makes a Caligula or a Heliogabalus, a Sixtus the Fourth or an Alexander the Sixth; and do not wealth, and good looks, and youth, and a decent amount of talent, constitute a power as absolute as the dominion of imperial or papal Rome?

While Mr. Jerningham lingered idle, discontented, ill at ease, amidst that Berkshire landscape which made Eustace Thorburn's paradise, the young man's life crept on sweet as a summer-day's dream. It had dawned upon him of late that he was not liked by the master of Greenlands, and he endured that affliction with becoming patience. He would have wished to be liked and trusted by all mankind, since his own heart knew only kindly feelings, except always against that one man who had to answer for his mother's broken life. He wished to be on good terms with everybody; but if a cynical middle-aged gentleman chose to dislike him, he was the last of men to court the cynical gentleman's liking.

"I daresay Mr. Jerningham thinks there is a kind of impertinence in my likeness to him," Eustace thought, when Harold's eyes had watched him with a more than usually disdainful gaze. "He is angry with the nature that has made a nameless adventurer somewhat after his image. Am I like him, I wonder? Yes, I see a look of his face in my own when I look in my glass; and that woman, Mrs. Willows, told me that I reminded her of my father; so Mr. Jerningham must be like my father. I can almost fancy my father that kind of man—cold and proud and selfish; for I know that Mr. Jerningham is selfish, in spite of M. de Bergerac's praise of him."

The idea that Harold Jerningham must needs bear some faint resemblance to the father whom Eustace had never seen, quickened the young man's interest in him. The two men watched each other, and thought of each other, and wondered about each other with ever-increasing interest, each seeking to fathom the hidden depths of the other's nature, each baffled by that conventional external life which raises a kind of barrier between the real and the artificial man.

Mr. Jerningham was a master of the art of concealing his sentiments, and Eustace, frank, true, and young as he was, kept all his gravest thoughts locked in his own breast; so, after meeting nearly every day for some months, the two men knew very little more of each other than they had known after the first week of their intercourse.

Early in June, when the garden and park, river and wood-crowned hills beyond were looking unspeakably beautiful in the early summer, Eustace left that arcadian paradise for a week's hard labour in the manuscript-room of the British Museum, where there were certain documents bearing upon the subject of M. de Bergerac's *magnum opus*—records of trials for witchcraft; ghastly confessions wrong from the

white lips of writhing wretches in the torture-chambers of mediæval England; hideous details of trial and *auto da fé* in the days when the great stone scaffold stood at the gates of Seville, and the smoke and the stench of burning heretics darkened the skies of Spain.

Eustace shared his uncle Dan's lodgings on this occasion as on the last, to the delight of both. To Daniel Mayfield his nephew's presence was like a glimpse of green fields and cooling waters seen athwart the dried sands of a desert.

"You are like a summer wind blowing the hopes and joys of my youth back to me," said Daniel, as the two men dined together on the first evening. "You are not like your mother, dear boy; but you have a look of hers in your eyes when you are at your best."

"I have been told that I am like my father," said Eustace thoughtfully.

"Told by whom?"

"By Mrs. Willows—Sarah Kimber—my mother's friend."

"Indeed! Yes; Sarah Kimber must have seen that man."

"And you never saw him?"

"Never. I was in London at the time. If I had been at Bayham, things might have been—— Ah, well, we always think we could have saved our darlings from ruin or death if we had been at hand. God would not save her. But who knows if it was not better for her to have sinned and suffered and repented, and lived her pure, unselfish life for twenty years, to die humble and trusting at the last as she did, than to have married some vulgar prosperous tradesman, and to have grown hard and bitter and worldly? Better for her to be the publican than the pharisee. You know what I am in the matter of religious opinion, Eustace, or, at any rate, you know as well as I know myself how I take Rabelais' Great Perhaps; but since your mother's death the shadowy hope of something better to come, after all this wear and tear, and drudgery and turmoil, has seemed nearer to me. The Great Perhaps has grown almost into a certainty; and sometimes at sunset, when I am walking in the busiest street in this great clamorous city, I see the sun going down in crimson glory behind the house-tops, and in the midst of all that roar and bustle, with the omnibuses rattling past, and the crowd jostling and pushing me as I tramp along, I think of the golden-paved city, that has no need of either sun or moon to shine in it, but is lighted with the glory of God; and I wish that the farce was over and the curtain dropped."

Much more was said about the mild and inoffensive creature whom these two men had loved so dearly. To Eustace there was supreme comfort in this quiet talk about the unforgotten dead. After this there came more cheerful talk. Daniel Mayfield was anxious to ascertain what his nephew's life was like at Greenlands.

"It is not an unprofitable life, at any rate," he said, with a proud smile; "for those little poems you send me now and then for the

magazines show a marked growth of mind. It ripens, the mind; and the heart is not absorbed by the brain. That is the point. It is so difficult to keep heart and brain alive together. Do you remember what Vasari said of Giotto, '*Il renouvela l'art, parcequ'il mit plus de bonté dans les têtes*'? There is *bonté* in your verses, my lad; and if Dan Mayfield is anything of a judge of literary yearlings, you may safely enter yourself for some of the great events. Of course you will not depend upon verse-making for your daily bread. Verse-making is the Sabbath of a hard-working literary life. You will find good work to do without descending to such cab-horse labour as mine has been. And take to heart this one precept throughout your literary career: you have only one master, and that master is the British public. For your critics, if they are honest, respect and honour them with all your heart and mind; accept their blame in all humility, and be diligent to learn whatever they can teach. But when the false prophets assail you,—they who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves,—the critics who are no critics, but unsuccessful writers or trade rivals in disguise,—be on your guard, and take care of your cheese. You know the fable: the fox flattered the raven until the weak-minded bird dropped her cheese. The fox goes on another principle nowadays, and abuses the raven; but for the same purpose. Remember my warning, Eustace, and don't drop your cheese. The public, your master, has a very plain way of expressing its opinion. If the public likes your book, the public will read it; if not, the public will assuredly let it alone; and all the king's horses and all the king's men, in the way of criticism, cannot set your book up or knock your book down unless the reading public is with them. Accept this brief sermon, Eustace, from a man who has lived and suffered."

Those were pleasant hours which the two men spent together, sitting late into the night talking of books and of men, of worlds seen and unseen; metaphysical, practical, poetical, theological, by turns, as the stream of talk flowed onward in its wandering way; erratic as the most wayward brook that ever strayed by hill-side and meadow.

Eustace believed in his uncle Dan as the greatest of men; and indeed, in close companionship the most stolid of companions could scarcely refrain from some expression of wonder and delight on beholding so much unconscious power, such depth of thought, such wealth of fancy, such grand imaginings,—all scattered with a hand as reckless as that with which Daniel Mayfield wasted his more substantial possessions in the shape of sovereigns and half-crowns. A dangerous enemy, a warm friend, a pitiless assailant, a staunch champion, large of heart and large of brain, with more of Ben Jonson than of Shakespeare, more of Dryden than of Pope, more of Steele than of Addison,—such was Daniel Mayfield, essayist, reviewer, historian—what you will; always excellent, and sometimes great; but never

so pure and admirable a creature as when he sat smoking his meerschaum dreamily, and looking across the blue mists of tobacco at the nephew he loved.

"And you are really and truly happy at Greenlands?" he said, after the young man had told him a good deal about his life in Berkshire.

"Happier than I ever was before in a stranger's house," answered Eustace, "though Mr. Jerningham evidently considers me an intruder."

"Never mind Mr. Jerningham; you do not exist to please him. M. de Bergerac likes you; and Mademoiselle—she tolerates you, I suppose?"

A crimson blush betrayed that secret which Eustace Thorburn was so incapable of keeping.

"Ho, ho!" cried Daniel; "that is where we are, is it? We are in love with our employer's daughter! Take care, Eustace; that way madness lies."

"I know that," the young man answered gravely. "I have kept that in my mind ever since I first went to Greenlands."

"Ever since? Ah, then, it is an old story!"

"I know the chances are against me, and I mean to cure myself, sooner or later; unless— Well, uncle Dan, I can't teach myself to look at this business as altogether desperate. M. de Bergerac is goodness, generosity, simplicity itself; and as for Helen— Don't think me a coxcomb or a fool if I say I believe she loves me. We have been together for nearly a year, you see, like brother and sister; I teaching her Greek, she teaching me music. I play the basses of her duets—you remember how my poor mother taught me when I was a child—and we have all kinds of tastes and predilections and enthusiasms in common. I cannot believe we could be so completely happy together if—if there were not something more than common sympathy between us. Don't laugh at me, uncle Dan."

"Shall I laugh at youth and hope and love?" cried Daniel Mayfield. "The next thing would be to laugh at the angels in heaven.—And so she loves you, this Demoiselle de Bergerac? I wonder how she could help loving you, forsooth! Has her father any inkling of this pretty little pastoral comedy that is being enacted under his very nose?"

"I doubt it. He is simplicity itself."

"And don't you think, Eustace, that, in consideration for that sweet child-like simplicity which so often goes with scholarship, you are bound to tell him the truth? You see, your position in the house is a privilege which you can scarcely enjoy with the consciousness of this treasonable secret. Tell M. de Bergerac the whole truth,—your plans, your chances of future distinction,—and ascertain from his own lips whether there is any hope for you."

"And if he tells me there is no hope?"

"Well, *that will seem like a death-blow*, of course. But if the girl

really loves you, her heart will be always on your side. In that case I should say wait, and put your trust in Time—Time, the father of Truth, as Mary Stuart called him when she wanted to obtain belief for a bouncer,—and O what an incredible number of royal bouncers were carried to and fro in the despatches of that period!—Wait, Eustace, and when you have made a hit in the literary world, you can carry your laurel crown to M. de Bergerac, and make an appeal against his stern decision.”

“And in the mean time, while the laurels are growing for my crown, someone else will marry Helen.”

“Very probably, if her love for you is only the caprice of a boarding-school miss, in which case you will be better off without her. Don’t look at me so despairingly, dear boy. You cannot get five-and-forty to regard these things with the eyes of five-and-twenty. I have had my own dream and my own disappointment, and have gone my ways, and cannot tell whether I am the worse or the better for my loss. Do you remember that tender little essay of Charles Lamb’s, in which he tells us about the children that might have been—the dear, loving, pretty creatures that never lived except in Elia’s dreams? I have my little family too, Eustace; and of a night, when I sit alone and the candles burn dim on yonder table, they come out of the dusky corners, and stand at my knee, and I talk to them, and tell them of the things that might have been if they had ever been born. And yet how do I know that they wouldn’t have turned out the veriest little rascals and scoundrels in Christendom, and the torment of my existence? I have missed the home that I once dreamt of; but I have my pipe, and my rare old books, and my faithful friends who come sometimes of an evening to play a rubber with me—as Elia’s friends used to come to him—and I take things quietly, and say Islam. Be honest and true, Eustace, and leave the rest to the destiny that shapes our ends.”

“I have thought that it might be my duty to tell M. de Bergerac the truth,” said Eustace thoughtfully; “but then, you see, I have set a watch upon every look and word. I have preserved my own proper position as a paid secretary with punctilious care. What harm is there in my presence in that house, where I am so happy, so long as I keep my secret?”

“But can you tell how long you may keep it?” asked the incredulous Daniel, “or how many times you betray it in a single day to everyone except that dreaming student, who has evidently no eyes to see anything that lies beyond his own desk? Your girlish blush betrayed you to me—blushes and looks and tones and sighs will betray you to the demoiselle, and then some day the great discovery will be made all at once, and you will find yourself in a false position.”

“Yes, uncle Dan; I begin to think you are right. I should be a scoundrel to profit by that dear old man’s simplicity. I will tell him

the truth, and leave Greenlands. Ah, you cannot imagine how happy I have been there. And then I am so useful to M. de Bergerac. The great book will come to a standstill again, or at any rate go on very slowly. And I am so interested in my work. It seems very hard, uncle Dan; but I suppose it must be done."

"It had better be done, my dear boy. Besides, you may not lose by your candour. M. de Bergerac may tell you to remain."

"I cannot hope that. But I will take your advice; the truth is always best."

"Always best and wisest."

It was thus decided. Eustace shook his uncle's hand in silence, and retired pale and sorrowful. The elder man felt this keenly; but he had something of the Spartan's feeling in his relations with this beloved nephew.

"I have kept him away from me because I love him; and now I take him from this girl because I love him," he thought as he smoked his last pipe in cheerless solitude. "I am more watchful of his honour than ever I was of my own."

There was very little more said about Greenlands during the few remaining days of Eustace Thorburn's visit. His face told Daniel that the die was cast. The young Spartan had determined to do his duty.

COMMUNICATIVE PERSONS

A THOROUGHLY practical belief in the theory that every virtue is an exact mean, supposing it to be possible or desirable, would at least necessitate the most unflinching self-discipline, and a mathematical impartiality to one's own weaknesses and those of other persons. Estimates of character would be formed upon wonderfully different principles than those which at present guide us, and a complete change in conceptions of social merit would be the result. Such expressions as "faults on the right side," "amiable failings," and the like, would vanish from our vocabulary. All faults would be equally wrong, and all failings equally unlovely. Virtue would be reduced to a fixed arithmetical figure; all other numbers, whether higher or lower, would be alike incorrect; one only could be right. Every deflection from the mean, on whatever side, would appear equally reprehensible; faults would differ in kind, but not in degree. People would no longer think that it was better to lean towards rashness than cowardice, towards prodigality than avarice, or towards unrestrained garrulity than impenetrable reserve. But this passionless Utopia is not likely to be realised. Until human nature is re-cast in some new mould, it will ever be disposed to view errors in one direction more favourably than those in another. Opinions as to the eligibility of one weakness over its opposite will differ with different minds; natural disposition and a disguised selfishness will decide the preference. Thus, some will consider the spendthrift to be less distant from perfection than the miser, and will regard the gushing prattle of the schoolgirl as better than the taciturnity of the misanthrope. *Quot homines tot sententia.* On these points each will have his own convictions, which no amount of argument will remove. Without the least wish to rob anyone of this privilege, it is still possible to make an attempt at striking the balance in favour of one of the latter pair of contradictory opinions, which have been mentioned in their most aggravated form. The reserved character is far from being socially attractive. It lacks, to a great extent, the charm of individuality and expression. Moody heroes of romance are exceptions. Though their voice is silent, yet there is always a strange expression upon their countenance, and a fire in their eyes far surpassing any mere eloquence of words. These, however, are not easily met with in real life; and it is usual to find that those who are characterised by extreme reserve of manner are voted dull, or damned with the faint praise of being "estimable persons." On the other hand, if excessive and inane talkers are generally considered bores, there are many who, while looking upon reserve as

sinister and unsafe, recognise in the unrestrained talk of communicative companions nothing but the overflowings of an open heart, and a generous, trustful spirit.

Is this view altogether the best that can be taken? The fact that the communicative character is, as a rule, confined to children, women, and very young men, might perhaps seem to imply a certain amount of weakness. And this opinion might be thought to receive additional support from the increase of communicativeness which generally accompanies indulgence in the cup. The man of maturity and experience does not care to rush into unguarded expressions of opinion or indiscriminate confidences; his dealings with the world have taught him reticence and caution. The youth, inexperienced and overflowing with self, has not yet learned to bridle his tongue; there are, indeed, some who never seem to learn to do so. Whatever they think they say, and the toads and diamonds fall promiscuously from their mouth.

There is, doubtless, a great deal that is fresh and delightful in all this. It may be very charming, but it is at times very awkward. Those open-hearted, impulsive, communicative creatures who never keep their own opinion back, who pour forth unreservedly all their cherished fancies and pet beliefs, may sometimes be amusing, but are often uncommonly dangerous. When in society, they not unfrequently resemble the bull in the china-shop. Whatever may be the subject of conversation or controversy, they speak out roundly and openly. They tilt *cap-à-pie* at statements which they are inclined to doubt, and often hurt by their gushing enthusiasm the feelings of their over-sensitive auditors. Abstractedly this may be beautifully natural, but socially it is annoying. It is in this class that persons who are so apt to make "unfortunate remarks" must be placed. Their friends, who may have more regard for their reputation than they have themselves, are in perpetual dread of what they may say next, for with them the wrong thing is ever uttered at the wrong time.

To turn to the other side of the picture. If the merits of the reserved character are of a negative rather than positive kind, so too are his faults. He at least will not wound the prejudices of society by unguarded expressions, or expose himself to ridicule or odium. Persons cannot well be communicative without being confidential. Like the Athenian reformer, who "took the people into partnership," they do not hesitate to admit whoever will be admitted into the secrets of their bosom.

Everyone will have met persons who, if they have not received a positive rebuff, are ready, after the first ten minutes' acquaintance, to lay bare all the inmost recesses of their heart. Give them but the opportunity, and there is no subject in heaven or earth on which they will not utter their opinion. Their position in life, their past, present, and future, their hopes for time and for eternity, will all be poured forth in rapid succession. Their sentiments seem to be like money in

the schoolboy's pocket—if they keep them to themselves they have no peace. The history of their family, of their fortunes, of their loves, will all be narrated with exuberant frankness and simplicity. It may be that the hearer who is intrusted with these confidences should consider himself highly favoured among men. But just as the attentions of flirtation are the less valued because they are so liberally dispensed, so, too, these confidential communications, being withheld from none, are gradually regarded as no special indications of favour or sincerity. What is the real motive of this enthusiastic unreserve? Do people really believe that what is interesting to themselves must interest all whom they meet; and that, in proclaiming what they think and do, they are but discharging their bounden duty to contribute to the edification and amusement of society in general? But the over-communicative are, as a rule, impatient of other. They are never fully satisfied or pleased unless they are conscious of the presence of a certain passive and receptive element, which they do not themselves possess. Nor can the passion for publicity be taken as a mark of extreme sincerity; experience teaches that excessive protestation is more generally accompanied by the reverse. It is hardly fair to say that it is altogether the result of selfishness and conceit. At the same time, certain cases of communicativeness, in which persons of ability have thought it necessary to lay before the world printed statements relating purely to their domestic concerns, cannot well be referred to anything but conceit, or, what is much the same thing, excessive self-consciousness—the idea that what affects them must in some way or other affect all mankind besides. Communicativeness, however, seems principally to proceed from want of tact, or thoughtlessness and absence of self-control. The same spirit which prompts people to be communicative might prompt them to strong words or stronger actions. But the form which it assumes in extreme cases is generally ridiculous rather than anything else. The case of a certain Mr. Riley, who, a year or two ago, thought fit to publish in the columns of the newspaper of his native town a list of the reasons which impelled him to marry his factory-girl Mary Jane, may not have been yet forgotten. Mr. Riley was only a *reductio ad absurdum* of the ordinary communicative character. He could not be happy without giving to his fellow-men an account of the workings and impulses of his own mind. If the result was more absurd than usual, it was perhaps his misfortune rather than his fault.

But the communicative character is seldom seen in its most perfect development in men. Whether it be owing to the fact, that it is difficult to hint with sufficient delicacy to a lady that she is a bore, or that ladies have not an equal number of conversational topics at their disposal, and so are obliged to speak with greater fulness on those which they have, this trait seems peculiarly to belong to the feminine mind. Yet even here, experience of the world and contact with society

render it far less prominent than it appears in a state of primeval simplicity. The matured young lady, who is enjoying her eighth or ninth season, is far less gushing than the *débutante* who has but just emerged for her schoolgirl chrysalis; and the discretion and reserve of the well-practised London wife and mother far surpass that of the country parson's lady, who spends her lifetime immured in the solitudes of Mudbury-cum-Littleton. If the confidences of the wife are possessed of a charm which those of the husband lack, they are not without their peculiar drawbacks. When a lady insists upon pouring into our ears a long tale of domestic grievances, of the weakness of human nature as displayed in the race of servants, and of the vanity of all things, a tax is laid upon our politeness which is not felt in the case of masculine communications. We must assume a virtue, if we have it not; and though we may be secretly longing for a check upon the torrent of trustfulness which the fair speaker pours forth, a semblance of attention and interest must be preserved. This wish may not be always confined to the immediately intended receptacle of these confidences. The husband who is aware of the prattling propensities of his better-half, if he happens to be looking on at the time, can hardly be altogether at his ease. A sensitive man who is blessed with a partner so open-hearted and unreserved will not relish having the secrets of his domestic life intrusted to each casual confidant. He will sit uneasily in his chair, will frown, will endeavour to turn the conversation to some more general topic. But in vain; he must patiently endure to the end. Meanwhile the position of the victim of feminine confidences is far from comfortable. On the one hand, he must not offend the wife by inattention; on the other, he knows that the unfortunate husband wishes him anywhere but near his wife. He is compelled to hear of the golden past—"before I was married," "when I lived with papa," "when I was at home;" all of which phrases and reminiscences, it is to be believed, cannot be otherwise than unsavoury to the present lord and master of her who utters them. The victim listens on, and feels uncommonly foolish, inwardly resolving that there shall never occur an opportunity for the repetition of his sufferings.

What is gained by all this? The listener has been bored; the husband possibly pained; and has the wife derived any solid gratification from either of these results? Nothing is more common than to find the mistress of a house, who may have seen wealthier days, overflowing with apologies for defects, real or imaginary, in her household arrangements; while each apology will be supplemented by an allusion to the departed glories of bygone times. Now this is the result of an effort—involuntary it may be, and unconscious—to create an impression that is really false. She would have persons view both herself and her house, not as they now are, but as they have been, trusting that the mention of her former higher estate will shed a lustre of unreal splendour over her present comparative humility. She would wish

her acquaintance, who have no pretensions to being fine people, to believe that, in spite of what may seem to be the case, she is really not as one of themselves, but superior in every way as Hyperion to a satyr. Such persons are peculiarly objectionable; there is an intolerable air of patronage about them. None can care for associating with those who seem to wish it to be thought that their presence confers a benefit upon the society in which they may condescend to move. This tendency is in reality only one of the manifestations of a communicative spirit. What, then, is to become of the warm impulsive nature which yearns for sympathy, and pants for some kindred spirit to whom it may reveal its hidden thoughts? Must it never be confidential? is it never to break through the cold crust of conventional reserve, or to pour into the human ear its tale of hopes and fears, of hates and loves? It would be hard to deprive those who are thus constituted of what is to them an inexpressible satisfaction. Only let them use discretion; let them admit, by all means, the friend of their choice, who will doubtless duly appreciate the privilege, into the sanctum of their hearts; but let them be content with this. The sympathy which they love is not to be found everywhere. Society is selfish, and it is better that only the tried and true should be the objects of their confidences, lest they should find that they have, after all, cast their pearls before swine. It is dangerous to seek to have too many confidential friends; the essence of intimate friendship is its limitation. To confide in everybody, means to be confided in and trusted by nobody. A person who is always ready to impart his own secrets to each stray acquaintance, will be equally ready to impart those of others. And even with the chosen few there are certain limits which it is dangerous to transgress. Excess of communicativeness has destroyed many friendships; it has led persons to open their hearts upon certain subjects, which, when the fit of enthusiasm has passed, they think it would have been better to have kept back even from the friend of their bosom. The next time they meet their confidant, they exhibit a caution which in them amounts to a suspicion. *Hinc ira*. There are some points concerning oneself which it is best never to mention to others. To do so implies a want of delicacy and self-respect, and cannot but render a man more or less contemptible in the sight of others. Judicious reticence is hard to learn, but it is one of the great lessons of life. There is a difference between babbling and frankness, between mystery and reserve. On this point there can be no better advice than that contained in the words of a certain philosopher who lived some two thousand years ago: "Let each one find out his own natural bent, and go rather in the opposite direction, for so he will reach the mean." And the theory of the mean, notwithstanding its many drawbacks and difficulties, might with advantage be kept constantly in view by those who are destitute of fine perceptions and of habitual self-control.

T. H. S. ESCOTT.



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T. S. Seecombe, del.

LYING IN WAIT.

W. L. Thomas, sc.

LYING IN WAIT

PERHAPS it was the nipping cold
That made me feel in moody frame,
As lately through Grange Park I strolled
One chilly morn in quest of game.
I scarce had fetched my pointers round,
And passed from out the shrubb'ry-gate,
The hall-door neared, when straight I found
That three sharpshooters lay in wait.

A sudden shock—a small surprise ;
I started, looked around, and lo !
I saw three pair of laughing eyes ;
I felt the artillery of snow.
I looked again, I looked once more ;
The leader of the snowy raid—
Methought I'd felt her darts before—
Was bonny bright-eyed Adelaide.

In wait she lay ! Her gentle look,
More potent than the sun above,
Soon as surprise my senses took,
Had thawed the snowballs into love !
I thought, ah me ! of last night's valse ;
I laughed—no more in moody state,
Turned to my stoic maxims false—
My fate was sealed—she'd lain in wait.

She'd killed a heart—*that* was her prey ;
It yielded to her subtle snare :
The snow had melted all away ;
More firm, love's arrow lingered there.
For love is warm, and snow is cold,
And in her snowball love lay curled ;
Love melted quick its snowy fold—
The ball she gently at me hurled.

RECOLLECTIONS OF HER MAJESTY'S THEATRE

BY NOEL D'ARCY, A.B.

My earliest recollections of Her Majesty's Theatre date from 1834, the second or third year of the engagement of Giulietta Grisi at the Opera. It was a period of extraordinary excitement in the musical world. The sensation created by the young and accomplished *prima donna* can hardly now be conceived. Those who estimate Grisi by her singing during the last ten years of her career can form no adequate idea of her vocal powers in her best days. A voice purer and brighter in tone, or of more delicious and sympathetic quality, was never heard. As a vocalist Grisi was highly cultivated, and as an actress possessed of the finest instincts; while in personal appearance she represented one of the fairest specimens of womankind that ever adorned the stage. Thus armed in triple mail of voice, art, and beauty, no wonder she conquered and prevailed. Yet Grisi did not come to England at a time—favourable to many singers—when the public, accustomed to indifferent artists, were ready to proclaim with delight the advent of a *débutante* of moderate merit. Far from it. Pasta had retired a few years, but the glory of her name still lingered among the echoes of the Opera. Henrietta Sontag had been married a short time previously, and had withdrawn into private life. Lalande and Blasis, two “first ladies” of high reputation, had “held the town” for several seasons; and Miss Stephens and Miss Paton had been sharing between them the laurels of the English operatic stage. But far more inimical to the success of any pretender to the loftiest honours of a dramatic vocalist was the fact that Malibran—“the greatest singer in the roll of fame”—had only seceded a year or two from the Italian Opera, and was performing at Drury Lane, creating a sensation unparalleled in the history of the theatre. Grisi nevertheless sang down all opposition, seemed to challenge all comparison, brought the operatic world to her feet, and was installed reigning favourite at Her Majesty's Theatre—a position she maintained without rivalry, or fear of rivalry, for years whose numbers need not be told.

People complain of the dearth of talent, lyric and histrionic, on the modern boards. Certainly the stage nowadays presents a different aspect from what it did when the writer of this notice first came to London. To show this, let me record the representations I saw in several theatres during my brief visit. My personal recollections of Her Majesty's Theatre are somehow mixed up with them. I came, in the aforesaid year, to London from Edinburgh with a friend. We went to the Opera on the evening of our arrival, and saw Rossini's

Gazza Ladra, with Grisi, Brambilla, Rubini, Tamburini, and Lablache. A more perfect performance could not be witnessed. Grisi's Ninetta was perhaps her most finished and exquisite achievement; Tamburini literally rioted in the florid music of Fernando, and acted with surpassing tenderness and force; Rubini gave the bewitching strains of the young soldier with consummate taste and expression, and a *finesse* beyond the compass of all other tenors; and Lablache endowed the part of the Podestà with a vocal power and dramatic significance it had never attained out of his hands. Brambilla too, with her rich, mellow, flexible contralto voice, gave the greatest possible effect to the music of Pippo. Speaking of the *Gazza Ladra*, I may observe here that this work, as well as almost all the other works of Rossini written in the florid style, has been banished from the modern Opera. We have no baritones now at either the Old or New House—M. Gassier might perhaps be excepted—who could give proper effect to the music of Assur in *Semiramide*, of Dandini in *Cenerentola*, of the father in the *Gazza Ladra*, &c. In this respect Tamburini's loss, both at Her Majesty's Theatre and the Royal Italian Opera, was irreparable. In fact, singers now are not half educated; and Rossini's music, which demands for its just interpretation every artistic grace and ornament, is out of court, as the saying is. Who hears of tenors or baritones making use of the "shake" which Rubini and Tamburini were wont to introduce with such striking effect? Further, I may mention that *prima donnas* in the present day treat the author of the *Barbiere* and *Otello* rather cavalierly. Time was when, properly to master Rossini's music was of the last consequence to the singer. Pasta made her first appearance before a British audience as Desdemona in *Otello*; Malibran and Sontag severally as Rosina in the *Barbiere*; Grisi as Ninetta in *Gazza Ladra*; Pisaroni as Malcolm Græme in *La Donna del Lago*; and, to descend nearer to our own times, Alboni as Arsace in *Semiramide*. On the other hand, modern *débutantes* seem carefully to avoid the operas of the Swan of Pesaro, and give the preference to those of Verdi, Donizetti, Flotow, or Gounod, as requiring less capacity and less acquirements in the interpretation to gain themselves credit. I am sorry to have to say that Jenny Lind constituted herself no worthy precedent in this respect. She not only eschewed the example of her illustrious predecessors of the last half century, and declined to make her first appearance as a Rossinian singer, but the whole time she was at Her Majesty's Theatre never *condescended* to perform in one of the Italian master's operas. The inevitable conclusion to be arrived at therefrom is, that the Swedish Nightingale did not choose to provoke comparisons with Malibran, Sontag, and Grisi on their highest grounds.*

* It is somewhat singular that during the first year of Jenny Lind's engagement at Her Majesty's Theatre, Rossini's *Barbiere* was not once performed—a circumstance which had not occurred in any previous season since 1818, when that greatest of comic operas was first produced in this country.

To return to my first visit to the Opera. After the performance of *La Gazza Ladra*, I had no great desire to see the ballet. I was, however, induced by my companion to remain. My "recollections" of this part of the evening's entertainment are not particularly vivid. I remember Fanny and Theresa Ellsler, and was much impressed by the natural graces and vigorous boundings of the one, and the queen-like appearance and dignified gestures of the other. What surprised me most was, that a greater amount of applause had been bestowed on either dancer than on Grisi. But these were the imperial days of the ballet and of the terpsichorean enthusiasm, which, a few years after, culminated in the "Pas de Quatre."

On the following Monday I went alone to Drury Lane to see the *Sonnambula* performed in English—Amina, Madame Malibran. The occurrences of that night have left an indelible impression on my mind. The "prologue" to the entertainment was sufficiently curious. Anxious to secure a good place, I had taken my position early at the pit-entrance, and was soon surrounded by an eager and excited multitude. I was not accustomed to crowds, and this was one that might indeed have struck terror into an older and more accustomed playhouse visitor than myself. After a space of time that seemed interminable, the doors were opened, and the rush was terrific. I was immediately lifted off my feet, and carried forward with the throng. I lost all recollection for a while, and when I recovered, found myself somewhere in the pit, holding the skirt of a man's coat in my hand. How I gained admission, I have no remembrance. I had not paid at the door. I handed the coat-tail to a policeman, and took my seat. When the curtain rose, my attention was soon absorbed in the performance. I thought no more of the difficulties I had encountered. All I saw and heard and felt that night may not be told in these memoranda. Having seen Grisi soon after in the *Sonnambula*, I may be allowed, however, to say that, while the *diva* of the Italian Opera left no very strong memories on my mind in the part of Amina, Malibran in the same character created a profounder and more lasting impression on me than any artist I had ever seen in opera or drama.*

* By all accounts, the vehement applauses of the Drury-Lane audiences were as the breathing of zephyrs compared with the frantic demonstrations and fury of excitement of the Milanese public, when, a year or two earlier, Malibran performed *Norma* at the Scala Theatre. She was called, we are told, *forty-seven* times before the curtain; and when she declined to answer the last summons, a row ensued of so violent a nature, that the chief magistrate had to appear on the stage, surrounded by his *gendarmes*, and read the riot-act before the audience would disperse. This circumstance is alluded to in some lines written on the death of Malibran, in 1836, by a young friend of mine, who, if enthusiasm could make the poet, might have earned a sounding name for himself. The following stanza—which I cite as showing the extraordinary furor Malibran created—is more to be praised for its feeling than poetic power:

"Where is thy glory, Milan; where thy boast?
La Scala's walls no more shall hear the din

A night or two afterwards I went to Covent Garden, and saw Macready, Charles Kemble, and Vandenhoff—under Osbaldistone's rule, if I remember rightly—in *Othello*; later, I adjourned to the Haymarket Theatre, and saw Tyrone Power in the after-piece. The same week I saw—or might have seen—Mrs. Nisbett at the Queen's Theatre,* Tottenham-street (now the Prince of Wales's); Jack Reeve, Buckstone, O. Smith, Mr. and Mrs. Yates, at the Adelphi; and Miss Romer, in the *Sonnambula*, at the Lyceum. This last performance, by the way, merits a word of explanation and comment apart. The talent of Miss Emma Romer was undeniable, and her heart was in her work—a quality rare indeed in English singers. In Barnett's *Mountain Sylph* she had won unanimous applause, and proved herself beyond all doubt the best dramatic singer on the English stage. If so successful in the *Sylph*, why not in the *Sleepwalker*? Bellini's music was not so much more difficult than Barnett's as to involve a great difference, and Miss Romer's acting would make ample amends for any vocal deficiency. Besides, the *Sonnambula* was all the rage, and why should Malibran and Grisi monopolise its triumphs? These were the arguments employed, and the ideas suggested were followed out. The *Sonnambula*, well and carefully got up, was performed at the Lyceum, or English Opera House, and Miss Romer, as Amina, was exalted by her admirers—or the attempt was made to exalt her—to the high position occupied by the two greatest singers of the period. Miss Romer was lauded to the skies, and a public presentation was made to her on her successful performance. The excitement was well managed, and no doubt answered the purpose intended; but I cannot help thinking that in the end the artiste's reputation suffered, and that it would have been more politic to have held her removed from all comparison with Malibran and Grisi.

During my brief sojourn in London this season, I saw performed at Her Majesty's Theatre—in addition to the *Gazza Ladra* and *La Sonnambula* already mentioned—*La Donna del Lago*, *Il Barbiere*, and *Don Giovanni*. The first of these operas had lost one of its principal attractions in Donzelli, whose place in the part of Roderic Dhu was filled by Furioni, a great favourite with the public, but whose best days as an artist were past. Of Donzelli, the most gifted singer as to vocal means ever heard, I must interpolate a few words. This prince of "robust

That from thy many thunder-throated host
Menaced thy giant structure from within.
Where the wide sea of waving kerchiefs seen?
Hats flung aloft, and hands in transport loud?
The Apollonic fury that hath been
In tempest-clamour o'er the madden'd crowd,
Till Fame resign'd her trumpet, overaw'd and bow'd?"

* Called at the time, I believe, the "Tottenham Theatre;" but re-named the Queen's" after the accession of her Majesty in 1837.

tenors" made his first appearance at the King's Theatre, on the opening night of the season 1829, as Roderic Dhu, in *La Donna del Lago*, an opera then in high favour with the subscribers. The time for "sensational" music had not yet arrived. Donzelli came from Italy and Vienna with a great name, but managers in those days had not learned the art, afterwards brought to such perfection, of "preliminary puffing," and establishing a reputation beforehand. This was reserved for the more artistic times of Jenny Lind and Johanna Wagner. From Donzelli, indeed, little was expected, even by those attached to the theatre; therefore the sensation he created was the more surprising. One of the band thus related to me the effect the new tenor produced on the players and the few persons present in the house at the rehearsal of *La Donna del Lago*. "We had heard," he said, "that the new singer had an extraordinary tenor voice, but gave little heed to the report, as we had been so often deceived before. Roderic Dhu's first entrance occurs at the commencement of the last scene in the first act. When it was time for the great mountain chief to appear, we saw a short, thick-set, good-looking man walk leisurely down the stage towards the orchestra, encased in a huge Spanish cloak, one skirt of which he had doubled over his left shoulder. But what took my attention most was the size of his throat. His neck was more like that of a bull than a man. The celebrated picture of Incledon singing 'The Storm,' in which that great vocalist exhibits an immense circumference of neck, would give only a faint idea of the Italian singer's throat. The leader gave the signal, the band struck up the opening chords, Donzelli advanced two paces, and sang a couple of bars of the recitative. The effect was electrical. A burst of rapture broke forth from every mouth, accompanied by loud clapping of hands and stamping of feet. We fellows in the orchestra, by no means a sensitive set, threw down our instruments, and vociferated and applauded until our voices and hands were tired. In reality, we had never heard a voice at once so powerful, noble, full, clear, resonant, mellow, and of such exquisite quality. I have been identified with the orchestra of the Opera before and since, and have heard all the celebrated singers for I don't know how many years, but never witnessed so sudden and striking an effect produced on the players as in this instance. Of the singer's artistic qualities of course we had then no power of judging, but the effect of such a voice would leave little room for critical consideration." At the performance in the evening the astonishment of the public was commensurate with that of the band and the small audience of the morning, and their enthusiasm was unbounded. Donzelli, however, did not absorb all the interest and excitement of that night. The renowned contralto Madame Pisoni made her first appearance in England as Mulcolm Grame, and created a powerful impression. By all accounts, this lady was the most gifted and accomplished singer of her class whom Italy had produced. Unfortunately, good looks are a stern

necessity to the public artist, and Madame Pisaroni was far from being a Venus. Another circumstance made this night memorable. The division of the pit into two compartments, and the erection of new private seats called "stalls" in that half nearest the orchestra, first took place, and gave rise to much disapprobation on the part of the public. What would the audience have thought could they have looked forward some years and seen the whole pit, a few rows of seats excepted, converted into these same "stalls"? As this was one of the most remarkable periods in the history of the Opera, I may be permitted to state—though not included in my "personal recollections"—that, a few nights subsequent to the *début* of Donzelli and Pisaroni, Malibran made her first appearance, after an absence of four years, as Rosina in the *Barbiere*, and that Sontag shortly afterwards made her *entrée* as Angelina in *La Cenerentola*, with Donzelli, Zuchelli the celebrated baritone, and Le Vasseur the eminent French bass. What a galaxy of talent is here exhibited! and what a contrast is presented to our modern companies in the fact that every singer was a master of Rossini's music! No wonder that vocal music was in a flourishing condition at this epoch. Indeed, just then, and for some years before and after, there was in London an *embarras* of vocal talent; for Italy was never so wealthy in singers, and the best came to try their fortunes at the King's Theatre, the great shrine at which the apostles of Art bowed down to Mammon. When the above-named celebrities quitted the Opera, their places did not long remain unoccupied. In a few years they were succeeded by Grisi, Persiani, Rubini, Tamburini, and Lablache—in some respects even a more remarkable quintet than that which figured in the Malibran period.

I first heard Donzelli in Edinburgh, in the winter of 1833-4. Signor De Begnis had brought an Italian company from London to give a series of operatic performances at the Theatre Royal. I was attending lectures at the College of Physicians, with an idea of writing myself down M.D. I was young, ardent, and passionately fond of music, though knowing little or nothing about it, and was infinitely pleased at the prospect of the Italian company performing in Edinburgh. About a year or so previously, I had heard the *Barbiere*, *La Gazza Ladra*, *L'Inganno Felice*, and one or two other Italian operas, in Dublin, and looked forward to hearing them again with the greatest interest. I had learned, too, that Donzelli was coming to Edinburgh, and the accounts I had of him from a reliable authority added curiosity to my desire. The series of operas at the Theatre Royal opened with Mozart's *Don Giovanni*. I knew nothing of the music at the time, nor of the story; so that when I saw Donzelli's name down for the libertine hero, I concluded that the part had been written for a tenor. In such profound ignorance I took my place with a party of ladies in a front box. The overture was played, the curtain rose, and De Begnis, as Leporello, sang his *complaint* in front of the Commendatore's house, into which

Don Giovanni had stolen in pursuit of the daughter. Then there was a noise behind the scenes, and Donzelli as Don Giovanni, and Madame de Meric as Donna Anna, entered. There is no worse *entrée* for the hero of an opera than that of Don Giovanni. He comes on, muffled in his cloak, struggling to make his escape from an incensed woman; singing under such circumstances is out of the question. The least possible knowledge can be formed of the singer from his vocal snatches with Donna Anna; and even in the trio for basses, after the Commandant is killed, there is no opportunity for isolated display, and generally the performer is unregarded. This is more likely to be the case when a tenor—a rare thing—undertakes the part of the nobleman, as his voice has not depth enough to give effect to the music. I believe not one person in fifty of the audience that night in the Edinburgh Theatre recognised Donzelli; at least, there was scarcely any applause when he came on; and, for my own part, I never supposed it was Donzelli. When Donna Anna appeared with Don Ottavio, hearing a high and rather pleasing tenor voice (I think the singer's name was Arigotti), I concluded it was Donzelli, and listened attentively to catch every note. The duet "Fuggi, fuggi," was well sung, and I tried to persuade myself that I was enchanted, and that all I had heard of the great tenor was unexaggerated. But in truth I was woefully disappointed, and could ill conceal my vexation. I had heard of a voice of unparalleled breadth, power, and sweetness, and nothing could be farther from that than what I was listening to. I took little note of what was passing until the scene before Don Giovanni's castle, where the peasants come on dancing, and Zerlina and Masetto sing their duo. Then I marked the entrance of a finely-dressed cavalier, who, after some parley, dismissed the peasants, and, left alone with Zerlina, accosted her with warmth. I had no notion who the cavalier was, but his voice attracted my attention in a moment. It was then I listened and listened and listened, and took in sounds that indeed, to my young thinking, might have "created a soul under the ribs of death." The sensation I felt when Donzelli—it was of course he—commenced the duet, "La ci darem," was indescribable. I scarcely knew whether I was asleep or awake until the lady seated next me, turning round, said, "Why, what's the matter? There are tears in your eyes." "Who is that singing?" I asked. "Donzelli, to be sure." No doubt the music had something to do with the effect produced on me. I had never before heard "La ci darem," and the charm of voice and melody together was too much for my sensibility, or weakness, or whatever you like to call it. I was a boy, and have no cause to be ashamed of the feeling.

I am not going to write a critical notice of Donzelli's powers; it would not interest the general reader. Of a singer, however, with perhaps the most magnificent organ ever bestowed on man, I may be excused for speaking at some length, more particularly as there were

no two opinions about him. My own impressions were corroborated by the very greatest authority. I was in the habit of spending an occasional evening with our own famous Braham a few years before his death. He was never weary talking of Donzelli, comparing him with other tenors, and avouching that, as far as regarded vocal means, he was immeasurably superior to any he had ever heard. I remember asking him to describe the difference between Donzelli's voice and that of Incledon. "You surprise me," he answered, "by this question, as in reality I could not name a singer besides Incledon with whom Donzelli could be compared. Their voices had something of the same grandeur of tone, volume, and richness of quality, and they possessed something of the same natural mode of expression and the same unstudied graces. But the Italian's was the larger and more magnificent organ; and as artists, no comparison could possibly be instituted. Incledon's style was rough and immatured; Donzelli's highly cultivated and polished." Braham's voice, by the way, unequalled in its day for power and manly expression, belonged to the Donzelli school.

To return to the *Donna del Lago* in 1834. Curioni was quite unequal to Roderic Dhu. In fact, he never could sing the music, his voice being more suited to that of Uberto. Grisi displayed her singing to perfection in the part of Elena, but had no opportunity of showing off her histrionic powers. Rubini I liked better in this opera than in any other by Rossini, except *Guillaume Tell*. His vocal performance was supremely fine; and the duet by Grisi and him in the first act was one of the most perfect examples of *ensemble* singing ever listened to. The lovely air, "Oh! mattutini albori," sung by Elena, was, when the opera was first produced, converted and vulgarised into the street-ballad "Oysters, oysters, sir, says she," and had a great success with the tuneless "gents" of the period. I think it was Mdlle. Brambilla who played Malcolm Græme. The performance of the *Barbiers* was wonderfully good, although Rubini's Count Almaviva left much to be desired. It was a pity, indeed, that Rubini ever appeared in comic opera. He was almost totally deficient in dramatic talent; and, except when instigated by music that involved passion or pathos,—at which time he might be said to be under the effect of inspiration,—he was listless and apathetic to a degree. He was averse to any display of action, and trod the boards as much like an automaton as our own Braham. He seemed to say to himself, "I shall not spoil the effect of my singing by any bodily exertion." His acting the part of Count Almaviva was simply amusing from its want of effort and purpose. Nor did his singing altogether satisfy me in this opera. The music was too broad and large for those "fine feathery" tones, as they were called—that "wailing cry" which produced so surprising an effect in the *Pirata*, the *Puritani*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, and other operas. The truth is, Rubini's voice was not a true tenor, but a tenorino, and even

exceptional in that class; and pure tenor music, like that of Count Almaviva, did not lie well in his register. That he sang the part with wonderful facility and incomparable ease cannot be denied, and in some instances, as in the trio in the last scene, in a manner that made it hopeless for any singer to imitate him. But on the whole, Mario's Almaviva is as far above Rubini's as Rubini's Arturo in *I Puritani* was above Mario's. Grisi's Rosina was inimitable from every point of view. Rossini himself might have written the music expressly for her, and she honoured the composer by singing every note as he had put it down. Grisi, too, was an excellent comedian, and acted the Spanish maiden with infinite animation, archness, and address. Tamburini sang the music of Figaro as I never heard it sung by any baritone, and was the most mercurial and vivacious of barbers. He wanted, however, the quaint humour and sly intriguing manner of Ronconi, which one cannot help associating with the "factotum" of Beaumarchais. But those to whom the music was the first consideration could not fail to be wonderfully impressed by Tamburini's fine sonorous voice, and singing that almost defied criticism. To such as had never seen Lablache in Dr. Bartolo, it would be vain to strive to convey a notion of that artist's acting. It was said of the celebrated Ambrogetti, the original Don Giovanni at the Opera, that when he had been cast for Dr. Bartolo in the *Barbiere*, and Figaro given to Naldi, he was wroth, and his friends advised him to decline the part. "No," he exclaimed; "I shall take a surer revenge. I shall make Bartolo the best character in the piece." And he succeeded, as we are told. I have no idea how Ambrogetti impersonated the old guardian, or what specialty of humour he displayed in his performance; but anything more genuinely comic or original than Lablache's Bartolo, in all likelihood, never was witnessed on the stage. I think, notwithstanding, that Lablache was overrated as a tragic artist; the extraordinary volume and grand quality of his voice, and his magnificent presence, contributing to invest him with powers to which he could lay no legitimate claim.

Il Don Giovanni was the last opera I saw at the King's Theatre during my first London visit. It was given on a non-subscription night, and between the acts a long ballet was introduced. Few of the regular subscribers attended, and I fancied the majority of the visitors were not profoundly interested, and that the most attentive were outsiders. They did not look as if accustomed to the place. This part of the audience was, in fact, composed of a different set from the ordinary visitors, including severe musicians and young would-be classical amateurs, who affected to hate Italian operas and Italian composers, and whom Mozart's name alone had power to attract to the theatre. They mostly frequented the pit and gallery, brought with them the deepest reverence for the composer of their choice, and were strangely demonstrative in their indignation at the slightest interruption. It

was pitiable to watch their agonies if anyone, at whatever distance, talked while the music was going on. They cried "hush!" and "shame!" and "Mozart!" and hissed, and called for the police, and astonished the *habitués*, who could not understand how anybody cared to listen to Mozart. The performance of *Don Giovanni*, indeed, seldom passed off without an *émoule* of some kind; and this night the Mozartists found two occasions on which they considered themselves called upon emphatically to proclaim their disapprobation. The first occasion was when Mr. Mori, the leader of the band, in playing the violin *obbligato* accompaniment to Don Giovanni's serenade in the second act, thought proper to introduce certain ingenious filigree *tours* of his own conceiving. The Mozart party sibilated, groaned, prevented the second verse of the serenade from being heard, and drew upon themselves the opera-glasses of the dandies in "Fops' Alley," who were completely mystified as to what was going forward. The second occasion was more grievous, as it originated with a singer,—and singers with your severe classicists are a race inferior even to fiddlers. Rubini was this time the aggressor. He had sung as well as ever he sang—which means better than anybody else could sing—Ottavio's air, "Il mio tesoro," and had literally, as was his wont, rapt his hearers—his old hearers—in Elysium, when an unexpected and discursive cadenza at the end evoked a storm of noises which seemed for a while to convert the grand *salle* of the Opera into the interior of a suburban theatre on Boxing-night. There was a terrible row, which it took some time to suppress. The Mozartists, I must say, had right on their side. My most vivid recollection of that night, however, centres in Tamburini's *Don Giovanni*—one of the most masterly, varied, courtly, and finished performances I ever witnessed on any stage. The modern opera-goer has seen nothing at all comparable to that splendid display of art and innate power, and every new attempt at either Italian house to realise the cavalier of Da Ponte and Mozart is attended with more or less failure. And yet *Don Giovanni* is played frequently now, where formerly it was played but twice or thrice in the season, and seldom fails to draw a crowded audience, even though the cast in general be worthless, compared to that of the period of which I am writing. This is one of the strongest proofs that the Italian opera is no longer a luxury restricted to the aristocracy, but an entertainment admired and desired by all classes of the community who know and care about music. In fact, it cannot be denied that the public now regulate the opera, the destinies of which were so long in the hands of the upper classes. For my own part, I believe that any work of art which depends on opinion, and is not capable of demonstration, must in the end be decided on its merits by the great majority, and think that Horace had some such notion in his head when he wrote

"Interdum vulgus rectum videt."

Here close my recollections of the Opera during my first stay in

the British metropolis. I returned to Edinburgh in less than a fortnight, and came back to London the year but one following—1836. I have since then been a witness of all the remarkable events which took place at Her Majesty's Theatre, from the first performance of *I Puritani*. I was a spectator of the whole of the famous "Tamburini row;" I witnessed the first appearance of Mario, and heard the last vocal sighs of Rubini; I was present when the gorgeous "amber satin curtains and fittings" were first exhibited at an evening rehearsal; I watched the rise, decline, and fall of the ballet. I marked the dismemberment of the great coalition,—the *Vieille Garde*, as it was called,—the separation of a company which had gained for itself, the theatre, and the management a world-wide reputation. I "assisted" at the *débuts*, at various times, of those shining lights of the art, Gardoni, Giuglini, Cruvelli, Piccolomini, and Titiens, which that cunning and indefatigable operatic astronomer Mr. Benjamin Lumley, from his observatory in Fulham, discovered on the musical horizon, and first made visible to the audiences of Her Majesty's Theatre. I officiated at the reopening of the Old House in 1856, after it had been closed for four years. I was an observer of the Jenny-Lind furor from its commencement to its conclusion. I was in the theatre to welcome the return of Henrietta Sontag, after an absence of twenty years. I saw Pasta make her last effort in Anna Bolena, and Grisi her last effort in Lucrezia Borgia—how pitiable in both instances I need not say. I shared in the deep and universal regret when Mr. Lumley, with more disinterestedness than policy, resigned the lease of the theatre to Lord Ward, and the star of Her Majesty's Theatre seemed quenched for ever. I rejoiced when Mr. E. T. Smith reillumed the altar-fires which should have been vestal; I rejoiced again when, after a year's suspension, Mr. Mapleson undertook the reins of government, and promised stability for the future.

To narrate all these matters in detail would fill a volume, and I am only penning a few hurried sketches. As perhaps the most interesting and exciting incident of the period which I have been discussing, I would add a few especial words about the Jenny-Lind fever. With all my profound admiration for the talents of the Swedish Nightingale, I cannot help thinking that she was placed in a false position. Indeed, in one respect she felt this herself most keenly, and knew she was utterly undeserving the fulsome and ridiculous praises lavished on her performance of Norma. It is said that the extravagant panegyrics of a certain journal greatly displeased and irritated her, and prevented her from continuing her representations of the Druid priestess. And after all, may not these extravagant and violent laudations, amounting to idol-worship, and which placed the artist in a position of perilous responsibility, as conducing to the fear that she might not always come up to the highest expectations, have had their influence in urging her to her sudden and unaccountable retirement from the stage, at the moment, too, when she was in the zenith of her popularity? Jenny

Lind, indeed, was the most sensitive, as she was the most sensible, of artists. I must own I could never see the vaunted superiority of the Swedish Nightingale. Her Amina was immeasurably inferior to Malibran's; while no unbiassed judge would think of comparing her to Grisi in Norma, or Elvira in the *Puritani*. But party-spirit ran high in those days, and prejudice was so rampant that argument was entirely out of the question. To prove to what an extent this feeling of partisanship was carried, and to show how wide-spread was that most infectious of all moral diseases, sympathy with proclaimed opinion, I shall relate the following anecdote *in re* the Swedish Nightingale, with which I shall take leave to conclude all I have to say at present of Her Majesty's Theatre.

A musical amateur, residing at a principal town in Hampshire, had a great desire to hear Jenny Lind. The London newspapers had given him such an idea of the artist's powers as singer and actress, that he was determined to come to town and go to the Opera on a "Lind" night. He selected the *Sonnambula* as, according to most authorities, exhibiting the Nightingale's powers to the best advantage. Our amateur friend was a chorister in the church, and had some notion of music. He had also obtained a slight acquaintance with the vocal art from attending an operatic performance whenever occasion led him to London, but knew little of singers or operas. His journey to London was one intoxicating dream of the delight awaiting him. If he entertained any other feeling, it was the fear that he should arrive too late. However, he reached London safe and early, installed himself in a hotel in the Haymarket, partook of a hurried dinner, and found himself in the pit of the theatre in capital time. How he deported himself during the performance this history doth not say. When the curtain fell on the opera his excitement was so intense, that no soul was left in his body to enjoy the ballet. His body remained nevertheless, and, what is more, needed replenishing; so he hurried across the street to the Café de l'Europe, ensconced himself in a box, and called for hot brandy-and-water, to be followed by a chop and kidneys. His situation was distressing. He was bursting with communicative desires. He longed to disburden his breast of the over-fulness of its wonder and admiration. O for a friend at such a time, to participate in all he felt, to share in his raptures, his enthusiasm, his burning emotions! O, Jenny Lind, what a witch thou art! The brandy-and-water proved a welcome solace; the chop and kidneys soothed his irritation, and paved the way for another glass. While thus employed, two gentlemen entered the box, and sat opposite him, but he was too much absorbed in appeasing his appetite to notice them. Hush! What word is that he heard? Did his ears deceive him? No!—Yes!—the strangers *were* speaking of Jenny Lind! He pricked up his ears and listened. "Well, I don't know, you know," observed one of the gentlemen; "but I always heard, you know, Malibran could not be beat."

"There is no comparison, I assure you," rejoined the other; "I heard them both, and can form an opinion. Malibran was very fine, and all that sort of thing, but Jenny Lind is the greatest singer." "Well, you know—" the other commenced, but was interrupted by our Hampshire friend, who suddenly and somewhat fiercely broke forth with the exclamation, addressed to the second speaker, "Right, sir! Jenny Lind is the greatest singer; and not only greater than Malibran, but greater than any singer past, present, or to come. Malibran! She'd give Malibran twenty!" And he resumed his brandy. "Well, you know," said the stranger number one, who spoke very slowly and quietly, "you cannot very well judge of the odds unless you know the amount of the game; and as you speak so very confidently, I suppose you have heard Jenny Lind often?" "I have just been over the way at Her Majesty's Theatre," replied the country amateur with much confidence, "and have heard her in *Sonnambula*." "The devil you have!" ejaculated the two strangers, laughing heartily. "Why, what are you laughing at?" inquired our provincial friend. "Only," answered number two, "at a slight mistake you have made." "Mistake! what mistake?" "Had you looked round you on your entrance into the theatre, you would have seen bills posted all over the walls, informing you that—" "What?" "The opera had been changed; so that instead of Jenny Lind in the *Sonnambula*, you have been hearing Madame Castellan in *Linda di Chamouni*."

One word about the burning of Her Majesty's Theatre, which has partly led to the narration of the events and incidents contained in the foregoing pages. The magnificent structure in the Haymarket, whose history for two-thirds of a century has been intimately connected with the arts of music and dancing, is annihilated, with not a relic left to indicate its former splendours. The familiar classical apologue, however, is about to be realised. A new theatre will arise from the ashes of the old one. It is well that an establishment with such lofty aims and purposes, so formed to advance the interests of the divine art, to charm, to delight, and to refine our social existence, should be restored to its pristine glory. Music is the most gratifying, the most universally loved, and best understood of the fine arts; and it would be nothing short of a disgrace to the country to allow its chief temple, so intimately bound up with numberless brilliant associations, to pass away from us.



THE PORTRAIT'S WARNING

BY H. SAVILE CLARKE

My friends the Mainwarings lived in Gordon-square, London, in the west-central district, and Mr. Mainwaring, a stout gentleman of fifty or thereabouts, was a musician; that is to say, he gave lessons in music, was the author of a number of songs and pianoforte pieces, and a performer of some note on the violoncello. They lived in very good style, as he had some little property in addition to his professional earnings; and the family consisted of father and mother, a lad at school, and a daughter Ellen, who at the time I am writing about had just reached the fascinating age of nineteen.

For myself I was studying medicine, and expected in a few months to pass the College and Hall, and then settle down in a country practice near my father. I had a good many friends in London, but with none was I so intimate as with the Mainwarings; and I must confess that the attractions of Miss Ellen had to answer for a good deal of non-attendance upon lectures, and for my presence in the family circle two or three times a week when I was in town. Mr. Mainwaring was an old friend of my father's, and on that account, and also because I was passionately fond of music, I was a great favourite of the composer's, who used to drag me off to listen to long solos, when I longed to be talking with Ellen, and hearing the more exquisite music of her voice.

It was a pleasant house to visit at, for Mr. Mainwaring knew many literary and artistic celebrities, and was himself a highly cultivated man, and not wholly wrapt up, like some professors of his art, in musical doings and his own compositions. Mrs. Mainwaring was pleasant and motherly; and as for Ellen—it was occupation enough for any man just to sit and look at her. She was rather tall, with dark hair, and eyes that looked at you from under their long lashes in a most bewildering way; she had the sweetest little mouth in the world, and she carried her small head as gracefully as an antique statue.

The house was well furnished, and Mr. Mainwaring had an artistic but rather expensive mania for pictures; and hundreds of them, in oil, water-colours, and chalk, hung about the rooms, and in some of the passages. Of portraits especially he had a great number, not only of historical personages, picked up at various sales, but of his own friends and family, and among them several of himself. I don't like a man having a portrait of himself in his room, especially if it is really well-painted and a good likeness. It always gives me an uncomfortable ghostly feeling, as if he had his *double* in the house, silently watching people from the canvas and endowed equally with himself with life and

understanding. I speak to the man, and then catch myself looking up at the portrait for an answer; or if a thought unfavourable to him crosses my mind for an instant, I always have an uncomfortable feeling that the portrait will know of it. A man with a good likeness of himself on the wall has me, I consider, at a decided disadvantage; it is not exactly two to one, but he is endowed, at least to my fancy, with duplicate characteristics and double powers.

Mr. Mainwaring had one portrait of himself hanging in his drawing-room which I held in especial detestation for this very reason. It was an absurd idea, for the picture was an excellent likeness, by a famous artist, and meritorious as a work of art apart from its merits as a likeness. And yet I could not endure it, although I had never dared to mention my aversion to the family, who were very proud of it; and it hung, as I said before, in the drawing-room, and in a very conspicuous place. I used to catch myself watching it when Mr. Mainwaring was by with a superstitious feeling that it was on the watch, and its presence seemed to cast a shadow over the pleasant room in which it hung. This feeling haunted me from the very first, and I little knew then what terrible reasons I should have for aversion to that portrait, and what a fearful event would make its canvas suggestive of saddest memories for ever.

I often wondered whether Ellen shared this curious and morbid feeling about that particular picture; and I called up my medical experience and reading, to see if I could find any account of persons so affected. Was it nervousness consequent upon a weak state of health? Hardly that, as I was unusually strong, and by no means of a nervous temperament. Hard study might have made me nervous, but I was also a great man for athletic sports and exercises, and so did not overwork myself. There was absolutely nothing to account for my vague horror and dislike of Mr. Mainwaring's portrait, and I tried in every way to dismiss the feeling from my mind, until it was again roused in a manner that I can only regard as supernatural. My story may be difficult to believe, but the truth has been stamped in letters of fire upon my mind; and although I do not profess to explain the appearances I am about to describe, their occurrence is sadly and indubitably true.

I called one day at the house in Gordon-square, and when the door was opened, Mr. Mainwaring, who was in the passage, came rushing up to me with a sheet of music, and said, "My dear Raymond, I am so glad to see you! I've just written such a delicious barcarolle, and you must come upstairs directly and hear me play it."

I of course assented, not without some speculation as to whether Ellen would be in the drawing-room also; but in that I was disappointed, and instead of looking on her dear face, my eyes fell immediately upon that of Mr. Mainwaring's *double*, the hated portrait.

Mr. Mainwaring went to the piano, and I turned my back upon the

picture while he began playing his new composition. It was a beautiful air, quaint and original, with the repose of moonlight in it, and the sound of rippling waters; the song of the gondolier in that "glorious city by the sea," where

"The sea is in the broad, the narrow streets,
Ebbing and flowing, and the salt seaweed
Clings to the marble of her palaces."

As the composer went on playing, wholly occupied by the music, I happened to turn round absently while listening to it, and so came to see the portrait again.

It was lighted up by the sunshine which streamed through the window, and the face looked as if it was covered with blood. I should say more correctly, half the face, the left side of it; and no words can describe the horrible appearance it presented.

I could hardly control myself sufficiently to prevent Mr. Mainwaring noticing my fright; but he happily went on playing unconsciously, and in a few moments I slightly changed my position in the room, and again looked at the portrait.

Once more the painted eyes looked into mine, and the likeness almost seemed to speak; and I saw again the ghastly appearance on the left side of the face, as if it had been severely battered and bruised.

I rubbed my eyes, and tested the perfectly healthy condition of my sight by looking at other things; but whenever they travelled back to the likeness I still saw the left side of the face covered with blood. It was horrible to stand there and look from the living man to the portrait with the terrible appearance; and in a short time I made an excuse and departed. No one saw the appearance but myself, for Mrs. Mainwaring came in just before I left, and called her husband's attention to some flaw in the gilt moulding of the frame; and they both looked at the picture and made no remark upon it.

I hurried from the house with a vague and uncomfortable feeling of alarm in my mind; but I gradually argued myself out of it, and began to believe that I had been deceived by some optical illusion—coloured light from some cause or other falling on the picture, or a refraction from the lustres of the chandelier.

I was very busy for about a week after the occurrence, and had dismissed it wholly from my mind, when one day I found a telegram on my table. It ran as follows:

"Mrs. Mainwaring to Frederick Raymond. Mr. Mainwaring has had a bad accident; please come directly."

I lost no time, of course, in hastening to Gordon-square, and arrived there just as another medical man drew up at the door.

We went upstairs together, and the other doctor must have thought very little of my nerves, for on seeing the patient I started back in alarm.

Mr. Mainwaring was lying on the bed, and the left side of his face was cut and bruised ; it was the appearance of the portrait reproduced on the face of the original.

And then I knew that the appearance had been an omen of disaster, and shuddered when I thought of the horrible gift I possessed of being alone able to see it.

Mr. Mainwaring had fallen on a crossing in Holborn, and his head was much hurt. I stifled the feeling of horror his injuries had at first aroused in me, and we proceeded to dress his wounds and make him comfortable ; they were happily not serious, and it was soon done.

It was the summer after Mr. Mainwaring's accident, from which he had recovered with no lasting injury to his face, and Ellen Mainwaring had promised to be my wife. I had not in the interval seen any return of the portrait's warning, and I had mentioned the former appearance to no one, not even to Ellen. If it ever came again, it would be time enough, I thought, to take her into my confidence ; there was no occasion to alarm her needlessly.

We were sitting together one afternoon, when her father came in to tell me about their plans for going out of town in the autumn, and suggesting that I should, if possible, join them in their seaside quarters. I was trifling with some fancy-work of Ellen's while he was speaking, when, on looking up, my gaze was attracted to the portrait behind him, and once more I saw the horrible appearance, but this time the whole face seemed to be covered with blood, as from some terrible wound.

I must have looked strange and startled, for Mainwaring suddenly said, "Are you ill, Fred ? You look very white !—Ellen, get him a glass of sherry ; he looks as pale as death."

Ellen manifested great anxiety, and when her father had left the room, she inquired tenderly what was the matter with me, and I resolved to tell her all. But first glancing at the portrait, I saw that with Mr. Mainwaring's departure the appearance had gone too ; but I did not doubt that if he came in again it would return.

And then I told Ellen the story of the first appearance, and how it had been followed by her father's accident, and how his face had been disfigured exactly as I had seen the face of the portrait.

She glanced fearfully up at it as she said, "And papa is going to the seaside to look after some lodgings for us ! He thinks of going out of town now for a little time ; and then late in the autumn again."

"A railway journey !" I said, aghast. "Can't we prevent it ?"

"It would be of no use telling him about it at all," she said sorrowfully, "even with the corroboration the first appearance received. He would only laugh at it, and would never think of putting off his journey."

I knew that too well, but I felt at the same time that some disaster was sure to happen whether he went or not.

At last I said, "Ellen, if your father does go next week, I'll go with him; I shall then be at hand if anything does happen to him."

"O no," she said at first; "I am frightened for you too!"

"But the appearance did not concern me," I returned; "so there will be no danger; at least, none of any special kind."

In the end she consented; and when the appointed time came, Mr. Mainwaring and I were speeding out of London in a first-class carriage, and swiftly leaving the city, fast breaking into lines of light, behind us. He was in good spirits, congratulating himself upon having me for a fellow traveller; but it was with difficulty that I could answer him in the same spirit, for the memory of the fatal appearance made me nervous, and filled me with gloomy forebodings.

It was a fine night, and the rapid motion as we whirled along had an exhilarating effect even upon me, depressed as I was. Every small station that we passed, marking a stage in our journey, gave me a sense of relief: my companion had got so far on his way in safety, and might continue so to the end. It was strange, seeing that any accident would probably be of an utterly overwhelming nature, that I had no fear on my own account; but the strong possibility of danger for my friend precluded all idea of it for myself.

We were passing through a deep cutting, so deep that it shut out all sight of the sky, when the carriage in which we were seated began to oscillate fearfully. Suddenly the engine gave three short sharp whistles: I knew what was coming, saw Mainwaring throw himself kneeling on the floor of the carriage,—then came a crash, a deafening noise, and I knew no more.

When I awoke to consciousness, I was lying on the side of the embankment completely jammed into the ruins of the carriage: I heard shrieks and groans on all sides, and men were rushing about with lanterns among the debris of the train.

I was bruised, I felt, from head to foot, but, as I found while I was getting out of the splintered timber, no bones were broken; and I turned to assist those who were in a worse plight than myself.

I moved to do this and to secure a lantern, when my foot caught against something, and a guard coming up at the time said, "You've had a narrow escape, sir; but I see here's another poor fellow dead."

There was no need for him to lower his lantern to the still face. I knew what he had to show me. I had seen it seven days before in a London drawing-room.

Mr. Mainwaring was lying at my feet, and his face was covered with blood, from a frightful cut across the temples.

The warning of the portrait had again come true.

I had been terribly shaken, and I was very ill for weeks after the accident; and poor Mainwaring had long been buried, when I received a note from Ellen. I had not heard anything of them, and had written

once or twice, thinking it strange that none of them had written, and I seized the black-edged envelope eagerly. The note was very short, and ran as follows:

"The portrait told the truth. You must judge me as kindly as you can, but we can never marry. My father's grave lies between us.
ELLEN MAINWARING."

I was still very weak, and had not been out since I was laid up; but within an hour from the time of receiving the letter I stood in the drawing-room in Gordon-square, and had not been there many minutes when Ellen entered. Her black dress startled me for a moment, and then I said, holding out the note,

"I do not forget your great sorrow, Ellen, but am I to believe this?"

"I wrote it," was the reply, and her face was cold and stern.

"But I cannot believe it," I said passionately; "you cannot be so cruel. Heaven knows I would have died in his stead to save you pain." She shuddered when I spoke, but made no reply.

"Ellen," I said, approaching her, "I had dared to hope that my love might in some measure lighten, when years had gone by, your heavy sorrow. It is my sorrow too. Have you no word for me?"

I drew still nearer, but she made a gesture of aversion, and then said in a constrained and hard voice,

"You have my letter; there is no need for me to say anything."

"No need!" I returned bitterly, "no need for more, when you promised me love, and I believed it true? If any living man had said I should meet with this reception, I would have told him he lied. If I had died, I might have had one kind thought from you; but now you will not speak to me;" and I leant upon the mantelpiece, and hot tears sprang to my eyes as I buried my head in my hands.

When I raised it again she was gone, without a word or sign. I took up the cruel letter and staggered to the door. I hardly knew how I reached home, and again for weeks I was prostrated with a renewed attack of illness, which proved to be brain-fever.

When I recovered, I got appointed surgeon to a whaler, and for three years I heard but little home news, and nothing whatever of the Mainwarings.

At the end of that time I returned home, and with all the old love for Ellen in my heart. I had tried to forget her; I had kept the letter, and tried to steel my heart against her by reading it over, and calling to mind her heartless conduct; but all in vain. I could only remember the charm of her presence in the early days of our love, when I knew her love for me was as fervent as my attachment to her.

The evening after I arrived in London I wandered into Gordon-square, but I found the house shut up, and a placard announcing it to let. I was bitterly disappointed, although I had had no intention of

calling, but a vague hope of seeing Ellen had led me there; and I had to go back to my hotel, feeling very sad and lonely.

I had come into some property by the death of an aunt during my absence, and on calling on her solicitor, who was an old friend of mine, I found it was far more considerable than I had expected; making me, in fact, independent of my profession. Mr. Lee kindly asked me to dinner, and hinted at a small dance afterwards; and as anything was better than moping about in town by myself, I promised to go, and presented myself at his house at the appointed time that evening. We had a very pleasant dinner; Mrs. Lee was kind and chatty, and the daughters lively and good-looking, and very curious about my whaling experiences, which I had to narrate at some length.

Mr. Lee and I sat for some time over our wine, as we had more business matters to discuss, and dancing had commenced when we went upstairs. I declined to dance at first, and sat down alone in a window-seat rather screened by a curtain, and watched the bright figures flitting about. In a little time I heard a request for music, and someone sat down to the piano to play.

I could not see the performer, but after a few masterly chords I was beyond measure astonished to hear poor Mainwaring's barcarolle, the one he had played to me on the day of the first fatal appearance, and which was always associated in my mind with the beginning of my sorrow. I supposed it had been published; and it was evidently a favourite of the lady who was at the piano, for she played it with great feeling and expression.

I bent forward past the curtain till I could see the player; her back was towards me, but a thrill went through me as I recognised something familiar in the pose of the shapely head, the smooth white shoulders, and even in the flowing black drapery.

It was Ellen Mainwaring. No need for her to turn after the final chord, to make me sure of her. No need to show me the face that had been with me in dreams ever since she had left me in my agony, with the cruel letter in my hand. It was Ellen, more beautiful than ever, with added grace and refinement from sorrow; and all my old love came back upon me with a passionate intensity to which my heart had long been a stranger.

How did she come to know the Lees? She had not been acquainted with them in the days when I first knew her: but how thankful I was that I had accepted Mr. Lee's invitation!

When she rose from the piano, Mrs. Lee went up to her and said, "Now, dear, you must be tired; come and sit by me;" and they came and sat down close to my hiding-place. It seemed so strange to be sitting there within a yard of her, and not to have the right to approach her, as in olden times. I could not escape without disturbing them, so I sat still.

Suddenly Mrs. Lee exclaimed, "Dear me, where is Mr. Raymond?"

I have never seen him since he came in from the dining-room; I want to make him dance;" and then growing confidential she added, "he is a client of my husband's, Nelly, and as he is young and well-off, I feel it my duty to find him a wife; and if he stays in town long enough, I daresay I shall manage it."

"Who did you say was here?" said Ellen faintly.

"A Mr. Raymond, Fred Raymond; perhaps you never heard of him. I didn't know you before he left England. But what is the matter, Nelly?" she added, seeing Ellen look deadly pale. "My poor child, are you ill?—let me get you some wine or sal-volatile."

"No, thank you, no wine; but I am not very well. I think, if I can find my cousin, I will go home."

"Well, dear, sit where you are," said Mrs. Lee, "and I'll go and bring her."

She bustled off into the next room. I went forward and looked at Ellen. She sat quite still; her face was death-like, and her small white hands were tightly clasped, as if the nails would be forced into the flesh. It was evident she was suffering from some strong emotion. I could not bear to see it, and at the risk of a second repulse, I came forward. She looked up and slightly started.

"May I sit here?" I said, taking Mrs. Lee's vacant chair.

She did not speak, although her lips moved; so I continued:

"I am afraid I startled you, Ellen; but you must believe that I would not have annoyed you by my presence if I had known you would be here to-night. I did not know you knew the Lees; but you must forgive me for not being able to see you without speaking to you."

She still sat with her hands tightly pressed together and her head bent down. I fancied that once more I was to have no answer, so I half-rose and said,

"I am going to leave town to-morrow, so that you need not be afraid of meeting me again."

Still she did not speak, and I rose to go away quite heartbroken. I had prepared myself for this, I thought; but the reality was more than I could bear. I had made a step to go, when I heard her say in a choking voice, "Fred."

I turned immediately, and sat down again, and then, seeing that she was almost overcome, I silently offered her my arm, and we went into a small room off the principal suite.

When we sat down she was sobbing violently, and I did not dare to comfort her till I knew my fate. At last she grew calmer, and I said, "Ellen,—forgive me, but I cannot say Miss Mainwaring,—I do not want to trouble you now, but may I call on Mrs. Mainwaring to-morrow?"

"Mamma!" she almost screamed. "O Fred, didn't you know that mamma—"

And her sobs and black dress told me the rest.

"My darling," I said, "will you forgive me? I ought to have known, —I ought never to have gone away. How you must have suffered!"

"I have, I have," she said through her tears.

"Will you forgive me for going away?" I said, "and—"

"O Fred, don't talk about forgiveness; can you forgive me for my wicked injustice? I was nearly mad when you left me."

In another moment she was in my arms, and a long kiss told our mutual forgiveness.

Three months after that time we were married, Mrs. Lee insisting upon giving the wedding-breakfast, and declaring that the match was entirely of her making, and that it was all nonsense for us to say that we had known each other before.

One fact remains to be stated about the picture which had foretold so much sorrow. On the day of Mrs. Mainwaring's death, which happened very suddenly, it fell down, and striking against a table in its descent, the face of the picture was utterly destroyed. "And so you see, dear," said my wife, "we can never again be frightened by the portrait's warning."

LIVING UPON PAPER

THE saying that "truth is stranger than fiction" is a very familiar axiom; and seldom has that saying been better illustrated than in the instance of the trial lately heard in the Court of Common Pleas, Dublin. Anyone familiar with the Hall of the Four Courts will remember trials arising out of political occurrences, religious disputations, and amatory disquietudes; but few cases have given rise to more gossip, excitement, and interest than the action at law between Lewis Harris and John Lloyd Bagot. The case was an action for the recovery of two bills of exchange,—one for 300*l.*, the other for 200*l.*,—accepted in the name of Mr. William J. Sidney, Q.C. A few words shall suffice to introduce the parties. The defendant was a relative of Mr. Sidney. One of the Bagots (Bernard) was the uncle of Mrs. Sidney by marriage. Captain Hynes of Rathgar, co. Dublin, was the grandfather of Mrs. Sidney. Bagot married Miss Hynes. The Bagot family are very respectable people from Galway; and in this manner became connected with Mr. Sidney. The defendant has for some time acted as grand juror and magistrate of Galway; and his brother, Mr. Charles Bagot, who figures extensively in the case, was on terms of even closer intimacy with Mr. Sidney. The main point in the case lies in a nutshell, but, like many such shells, it has been expanded into enormous dimensions, and has taken fourteen or fifteen days to crack. So much for Irish legal procrastination. Whatever may be said about other Irish questions, no one can say that when the lawyers in Ireland get a good case, they let it slip easily and prematurely through their fingers. Coroners and advocates have distinguished themselves in that country for the facility and willingness with which they protract cases; but seldom has a trial been longer protracted than in the present instance. If truth lies at the bottom of a well, it assuredly takes much time and trouble to extract it. Can it be believed that the only question at issue was, whether the defendant gave Mr. Sidney permission to sign his name to the bills, on account of which the action had been brought? A relationship, we have said, existed between the parties. In the business of life the ties of family connection are apt to become of all chains the most galling. The cousins or the brothers-in-law treat one another with an easy-going friendliness, in which the strict laws of *meum* and *tuum* are perhaps ignored. All goes on smoothly enough till the unlucky hour arrives when it becomes necessary to settle money transactions. Then comes the tug of war; and too often the relatives prove the bitterest foes. In the present case, Mr. Sidney was deficient in

moral courage. On the one hand it seems that, instead of standing his ground, in the maintenance of the principle that he had received from Mr. Bagot a *parole* permission to sign his name to bills,—he suffered himself to be cajoled into inditing a letter criminating himself, and admitting that he had not this authority at all. Or, on the other hand, he transgressed the law, committed forgeries, and atoned for his error by an avowal of his crime. Never has evidence been more contradictory; never have statements been more at right-angles; never have we found it more difficult to come to a conclusion; and from a very early period in the trial, it was plain that a disagreement in the jury-box was inevitable. The case in a great measure illustrates how matters are in some instances managed at the Bar of Ireland. It is admitted that Mr. Sidney was an excellent junior barrister; but there are not a few who entertain the opinion that “he got out of his depth” when he embarked in the higher duties of a leader, and tried to break a lance with the more accomplished and erudite of his great profession. How, then, was position to be obtained? Professional success was slow; something should be done to accelerate and ripen the tardy growth of fame. Money should be raised; attorneys feasted; bill-discounters fed; a splendid mansion in Rutland-square obtained; the drawing-rooms furnished with gorgeous ottomans, and adorned by rare works of art; the wine-cellars supplied with the choicest wines—*charged for as such*, no doubt; but no one can dispute that there *are* better judges of pure vintage than bill-brokers, though few better judges of a high rate of interest. Mr. Sidney gave a round of professional parties; dinner-parties, suppers, and balls. All this while he was following the mirage—pursuing a shadow—living upon paper. He had suffered himself to be entangled in a web-work of debt and difficulty; he had passed into the maze and could not rescue himself. Who is there, acquainted with the progress of a junior counsel, can believe that at this time, while Mr. Sidney was entertaining the attorneys and the brokers, and indulging in reckless entertainments, flattered and lauded as a member of parliament in perspective, a judge in embryo—he was indebted to many people to the extent of 20,000*l.*, in debt to several private friends and public money-lenders, “over head and ears in debt”—drifting to ruin, like a doomed wretch in a miserable canoe going right over the rapids? This was living *fast*, with a vengeance. The time for a crash came; the bills were repudiated; the alleged permission to sign them was altogether denied; and Mr. Sidney was forced or induced to fly from the home he had beautified, the rooms he had furnished, the walls he had adorned, the cellars he had stocked, all with the money of other people. Nay, he had threatened to commit suicide, and face his Creator, in the midst of this sea of troubles. A remarkable conversation took place, according to Mr. Sidney, between him and Mr. John Bagot. This Mr. Bagot had signed bills for him; and on one occasion Sidney put a bill into an ordinary envelope with a letter, request-

ing Bagot to affix his signature to it, but by accident Mr. Bagot tore these up and threw them into the fire. Finding what he had done, he wrote three letters to Sidney in reference to the mistake he had committed, and the inconvenience to which he had been put; but it would seem that Sidney had not received any of these letters, and Bagot in the conversation with him asked why he (Sidney) had not written his (Bagot's) name across a new bill; no one would have been the wiser, and he (Sidney) would know what to do another time. Mr. Sidney's rejoinder was, "All right." Bagot added, "*Whenever you want my name, and I am not present, you know what to do.*" In the evening after this conversation, Bagot borrowed from Sidney 10*l*. We may at once say that the alleged privilege to sign the name has been emphatically denied by Bagot. Light and darkness are not more at variance than the evidence of these cousins. On a subsequent occasion, Bagot enclosed Sidney a letter which he had received from the manager of the Bank of Ireland in Ballinasloe, asking him to divulge the nature of the pecuniary dealings which he had with him, as the directors knew he (Bagot) had a large amount of *paper afloat*. Bagot asked Sidney what he should do; and Sidney replied, "Tell them that you and your father have borrowed 10,000*l*. from my wife's grandfather; of that amount 5,000*l*. are unpaid. Say also that I am entitled to the money in right of my wife, and as I had not received it, I was authorised by you to put your name upon the bills." To this Mr. Bagot replied, "I have sent such a letter." Mr. Sidney had other dealings with a young fellow named Hynes, whose sister he had married. It appears that he put the name of Hynes to a bill for 90*l*., with, as Sidney says, the authority of Hynes, for whom he affixed his signature to bills during the young man's minority. Mr. Sidney, in his evidence, gave the following description of the circumstances attendant on the writing of the letter already referred to. We give it in his own words:

"On Friday the 17th, Charles Bagot called on me; he brought the account he had manipulated—the one I wrote on the 14th of August. He said, 'I am going to Purcell to draw up the bill of sale.' I said, 'What in the world do you mean? Have you not washed your hands out of the transaction?' He threw down a cheque for 50*l*., saying I would want to pay for some little matters, and that he would have the bill of sale; saying, 'I will take care of you; if you leave yourself in my hands, I will have you back in November.' I took the cheque. He left, taking the accounts, to go to Mr. Purcell. About twelve o'clock that day, Bernard Bagot and John Bagot came to my house and entered the study. Bernard went out and closed the door; John sat at the desk, and had before him a sheet of case-paper covered with his handwriting. He said, 'Bernard is clearly of opinion you should forthwith go,' as Henry Hynes would have me arrested; and he did not see any use of his losing all his money if it did no good to anyone. I said, 'Well, what are you at now?' 'Well,' said he, 'Bernard suggests that I

should get something from you.' 'What is it?' I said. 'A letter,' he replied; 'I have got the draft of it here; just look at it.' I did so; it commenced with these words: 'My dear John,—In reply to your letter just received, I beg to state that I never had your authority for putting your name to the bills.' There was a great deal more in the document. I started back and said, 'Good God! are you going to take pattern by Henry Hynes, and repudiate your bills?' 'No,' said he, 'I am not going to do that; but you know it is admitted that they are not in my handwriting, and how can you prove the circumstances under which they were signed?' I said this idea never came from himself, and that I would never sign such a letter. I said, 'John, I have four children; you are a father yourself, you have children; how would you like, after you had gone to the grave, to have a document of that sort left under your hand stating you were a felon, perhaps to have it thrown in the teeth of your children? If you were similarly circumstanced, would you do that?' He said, 'I would not.' Then I said, 'Throw it aside.' He was going to throw it aside, when he said, 'Perhaps you had better keep it and think over it; it is for your interest more than mine.' I said there was no harm in keeping it, and I threw it into a drawer. On the 12th or 13th of August, I had given him a law-book called the *Green Book*, written by the late Mr. Vance; I wrote his name in it, and I think the date. When the letter business was concluded, he turned to me and said, 'William, I must return you this book.' I said, 'Why?' He said, 'Bernard thinks it would look very odd if it was seen in my possession after you were gone, and that all communications between us should be effaced.' I said, 'This planning and management, believe me, is immaterial, and won't be successful, if you are trying to get rid of your liability on the bills.' He said he believed I was right, and he would keep the book; and he did keep it. After some further conversation, he said, 'William, I must disappear, and Bernard has advised me to make myself scarce.' He said when I was away the creditors would take a composition on the bills; and that, so far as he was concerned, 2,500*l.* would be forthcoming at two hours' notice. He said Charles would take the bill of sale, and give me the money to provide for my going; that nothing would be disturbed, and everything secured until I returned."

In another part of the testimony the following version was given of the subsequent transaction:

"Mr. Bergin remained with Mr. Sidney for four hours, and during that time Mr. Sidney made a full statement of his affairs to him. Bernard Bagot insisted on his going, and it was then arranged that he and his son should leave that evening, and Mrs. Sidney and the children should go after. Mr. Sidney described the excitement that prevailed on the occasion, and said that for several days previously he had not taken six ounces of food, and the only nourishment he took was port-wine. He had not taken off his clothes since the previous Tuesday. Bernard

Bagot put the alternative before him, and said he should either go or not. Bernard and Charles took the letter to a secretary near the window, where they spent ten or fifteen minutes revising and altering it according to their fancy. James Blake was in the room at the time. When they had altered the letter at the window, Bernard came over and said, 'Now, William, write that.' He (Mr. Sidney) then said, 'Well, if I must do it, I will; but God forgive you!' He then went to write it on a sheet of note-paper; but Bernard handed him a sheet of foolscap, and said he wished to have the postmark on the same paper, in order that, if there were any argument afterwards about the matter, it would show when John first got intimation about the bills. He (Mr. Sidney) replied that John would never sanction such a proceeding, and that this was a letter that he would never have asked him for. Bernard insisted that he should write it." Mr. Sidney, who appeared to be greatly moved during this part of the narrative of those transactions, then said: "I took a long time to write it; and when I finished it, Bernard said, 'Put on the postscript.' I did so; and it was something to the effect that if ever I was able to pay—I don't know whether it was John or somebody else—I should do so; I know that I was to pay somebody if I was able. As soon as I wrote that letter, I threw it on the table, and said, 'I have now signed my death-warrant.' My wife jumped up and said, 'Good God! what have you done?'"

The sad scene is drawing to a close. Mr. Sidney thus describes it:

"I then got my little boy's luggage and my own, and my servant-man went to Westland-row to buy tickets, fearing that a detective should be there waiting. It was arranged that they should go see me off. The cab was sent on with the luggage in front, in order that it might not be supposed it had any connection with us. Myself and my son got up on a car; James Blake was on one side, and Bernard Bagot helped me up on the other. Just after we got up on the car, we heard great screaming, and looking up, saw Mr. Charles Bagot at his bedroom window, waving a towel, and crying, 'Bravo! we will have you back again.' Before that, Charles Bagot pledged his solemn word to me that they would work heaven and earth to get me back, and that not a stick in the house should be stirred so long as there was any hope of their being able to do so. When they were going along, Bernard Bagot commenced to talk to James Blake, and asked me to give him particulars as to what bills I thought Henry should pay. When they were passing the post-office in Sackville-street, Bernard said, 'William, we may as well post these letters.' I said, 'That is the first I heard of it.' He then said I should go with him and post them, because it would never do for him to say hereafter that he posted the letters himself. It was late, and I remarked that he should put extra stamps on, and put them in the late receiver; we then, almost by a joint action, posted the letters. Bernard Bagot then said that it would be dangerous for him to go further, as some persons might go there to see me off. He

said, 'William, I'll bid you good-bye here.' And he did so, giving me a solemn assurance that he would see Bergin and do the best he could for me. I said I would get a place in London, where I would remain for a month, and that I would write to him. We parted, and we never met again as friends."

The mother of the young gentleman to whom allusion has been made, Mrs. Hynes, gave evidence, in the course of which she detailed a conversation she had with him relative to his having been induced to give authority to Sidney to sign his name to bills. Her evidence was to this effect:

"I am not certain whether I wakened my son or not, but I said wasn't this a shocking business about Sidney's affairs. I pitied my daughter, of course, and was greatly affected at it myself. I asked him had he ever signed any bills, or anything to that effect, for Mr. Sidney. He told me that he had signed three, but that there was a fourth out. 'O,' said I, 'if there is a fourth out, that must be forgery.' I think he asked my daughter Matilda would she give her 2,000*l.* to him to give Mr. Sidney. She said she would not until she would go to an attorney, as she was not of age, and had no control over her money.

"Was anything said about his not doing any more bills?

"O, yes. I told him not to attempt to sign any more bills, as it was bills that had ruined his father. He said he would not. He told me he had signed three bills. I never asked him to swear that he would not do so. I did not ask him to make a false statement, or suborn him to commit perjury."

One or two features in the case are peculiarly striking. First, the *absence* of Mr. Charles Bagot; secondly, the presence in the case of Mr. Serjeant Armstrong. Charles Bagot was the man who knew most about the affairs of Mr. Sidney. It is remarkable and is to be regretted that he should have become insane at this particular juncture—he should have become deranged "hereafter." Some of the incidents in which he figured were ludicrous. On one occasion, when Sidney asked him to dine, he produced a beefsteak from his pocket, and boasted that he brought his dinner with him; and when Sidney was levanting, he bade adieu from the window, waving a towel, and shouting that he would have him back soon. Yet this affectionate friend was immediately afterwards in possession of Sidney's house, and had raised 5,000*l.* on the bill of sale. This Mr. Charles Bagot had investigated the affairs of Sidney, and it was he who, in giving evidence in an action tried in December 1866, swore in substance that he had committed forgeries. It is a most singular fact, in reference to this gentleman's conduct in the case, that before he entered the lunatic asylum, he "took up" his papers from the offices of two solicitors, and drew a cheque on the Bank to pay Dr. Eustace for his services in curing him. We cannot doubt that the eminent medical men who examined Mr. Charles Bagot believed him to be insane—a suicidal lunatic; but there are many who

are of opinion that, as the excitement is over, his mental condition will speedily begin to amend. The affairs of Sidney were investigated by this Mr. Bagot, and a letter was written by him to his brother in Boulogne relative to those affairs. That letter was not forthcoming. What had become of it? Owing to the absence of Charles Bagot, and the non-production of the letter, the case was incomplete. There were breaks and gaps in the case certainly, and it would have been a wonder if the jury had agreed to a verdict. That was a striking scene, indeed, where Bernard Bagot threatened to give Sidney into the custody of the police if he did not sign the letter—"the death-warrant," as it was truly termed—acknowledging his own crime. It is a puzzling question, no doubt, whether Bagot dictated the letter, or Sidney gave it of his own accord. One thing is certain—the letter was in Sidney's own handwriting. His conscience, as a *Nisi-Prus* advocate, was not peculiarly sensitive, nor was he ever so unselfish as to annihilate himself to serve or please others. One thing tells favourably for Sidney: Bagot did not repudiate the bills till the Thursday before Sidney's flight. On the Wednesday, when Bloomfield (an attorney) and others were present in Sidney's house, Bagot did not repudiate them. Why not? Had a new light burst upon the mind of Bagot, and had the time arrived, when Sidney was absconding, to repudiate the liability? It is possible that Sidney signed the bills in the name of Bagot to save time, relying upon the dealings and understanding between them, and perhaps the authority given by Bagot to him in other instances. Fatal facility and privilege! Sidney should have recoiled from the temptation, and waited till Bagot signed the bills himself, or had given him a written authority to sign them. Fatal letter, that put the millstone about his neck not to be taken off! Fatal flight, that almost confessed his guilt! It is true that Sidney and the Bagots were first cousins—the children of sisters; but though this rendered the intimacy familiar, it could not justify the unauthorised use of a name in a bill-transaction. The case is marked by some distressing features. The relatives of Sidney have been the instruments of his ruin; his bosom friend, a leading counsel, against him—the man best acquainted with his inner nature and daily life was employed to probe and sift him. Better had it been if the etiquette of the Irish Bar had induced the learned gentleman to throw up the brief and refuse the retainer. The physician or surgeon who attends a patient could not better know his constitution than the bosom friend knew Sidney's character and disposition. Was this the reason why he was employed to probe and cut him up? Is this the morality of legal life?

A word or two relative to the bill-brokers. The laws of these countries permit the use of bills of exchange—the commercial utility of the system is acknowledged; but no institution designed for the common good has been more abused. We are infested by the tribe of usurers. Necessary evils sometimes, and even friends on an emergency, they too frequently cause the ruin of young men—too frequently lead to the

reckless depravity or suicide of the unfortunate wretch who has been entangled in their meshes. If we desire to learn the degree of social wickedness to which such evil practices can reach, the present case affords an opportunity. We are familiar with the evil, and therefore do not wonder at the facts that have come to light in Sidney's case. Perhaps the circumstances in this case were not characterised by any great departure from the ordinary dealings between borrower and broker, and may present only a small portion of the scum that has risen to the surface of this bubbling and seething caldron. Were the incidents put together in the form of a sensation novel, the story would have its principal attraction in the stern reality of its every-day facts. The actors in the drama are artistically distinct in relation and character, male and female—lawyers, money-lenders, traders, magistrates, and attorneys. Though the jury *have* disagreed, and though "the preponderance of voices" is in favour of Sidney, it is more than questionable whether it would redound to the honour of the Irish Bar that he should practise at it, or prove pleasant to himself that he should be exposed to the petty daily irritations which these unhappy revelations must inevitably engender.

The saddest part of the narration is, that, had Mr. Sidney waited just a little, bided his time and rested on his oars, his success was as certain as the progress of a well-rigged bark over the ocean, when wind and tide combine to favour it and waft it to a peaceful and honourable haven; but in an evil hour he preferred the hazardous short-cut of factitious displays and pretentious grandeur. The bubble has burst—the mirage has disappeared; and he who might have become an ornament of the Irish Bench, in a few years—nay, perhaps within a year from hence—is struggling against the stream, and striving to preserve his reputation and his life.

S. N. E.

THE LAST DAY OF POMPEII

I.

THE coloured gleams of evening fall
Fainter and fainter on the wall ;
Darker the cypress columns rise
Against the pallid twilight skies ;
O'er the hushed fields unceasingly
There comes the murmur of the sea.
Glaucé, it was a year to-day
We first met on the Appian Way.

II.

A month,—and from your lips I'd learned
The words that long before had turned
Your young heart from our worn-out creed.
They seized you ; you were doomed to bleed—
A Christian to the lions thrown :
I sorrowed for you—I alone.
The cruel lictors mocked my woe,
Or bade me unto Nero go.

III.

Hark how the fountain babbles sweet,
Like clepsydra with measured beat !
God ! how unlike this hour of rest,
That brings a balm to every breast,
Was that when the fierce thousands came,
Shouting the Christian's hated name,
While, from the cell's low grated door,
Loud boomed the lion's long bass roar.

IV.

Fast as around a circled mould
Diffusive runs the molten gold,
So the wild multitude sought place,
A hellish hate in every face.
I, driven by the Furies, too,
Struggled among the brutal crew,
Till brazen trumpets clamoured shrill,
And all that wicked world grew still.



Thomas Gray, del.

W. A. Cranston.

THE LAST DAY OF POMPEII.

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V.

They brought the Christian virgin bound ;
The savage lictors dragged you round.
" Where now's your Jewish God ? " they cried.
Dread Cæsar, in his purple pride,
Sat eyeing you with snakish glance,
One hand upon his gilded lance ;
His parasites stood by his chair,
And all those cruel priests were there.

VI.

You spoke not, Glauçé, but you gave
One look to God, who still could save ;
As I prayed for the lightning's fire,
With all Olympian Jove's fierce ire,
To smite the Cæsar ; and just then
Stood up two fierce Dalmatian men ;
As each blew harshly on his horn,
The cruel courtiers laughed in scorn.

VII.

You knelt down—Nero waved his hand,
And stealthy o'er the unstained sand
A lion came, his tawny mane,
Terror of many an Afric plain,
Trailed slow across that fatal floor ;
And scarcely had you heard his roar
Ere a huge leopard flew at him—
And rolled and grappled limb to limb.

VIII.

They drew apart, their hungry gaze
Fixed upon you with wild amaze ;
Another moment they would spring !
But I, all maddened where I cling
Unto a pillar, force a way
Past Cæsar and his proud array ;
Like diver from a cliff I dart,
Leap down, and clasp you to my heart !

IX.

One blow, I strike the leopard dead ;
Then, with my keen blade dripping red,
Run at the lion. Cheer on cheer
From the vast multitude I hear.

THE LAST DAY OF POMPEII

He has me down—a sun-lit sword
Drives him from off me. Gracious Lord!
Some angel saved me, as I lay
Clasping you round, who bid me pray.

X.

Nero had spared us. Glaucé, hark!
Philomel singing through the dark;
And over yon gray cloudy bar,
Rises the first bright evening star.
God send us peace! How calm the night!
God guard our house till morning light!
The mountain's murmuring in its sleep;
Good angels, watch above us keep!

W. T.

ON THE "SENSATIONAL" IN LITERATURE AND ART

BY GEORGE AUGUSTUS SALA

SOCIETY must have a Cry, and what the cry may be does not very much matter, so long as it be cried loudly enough, and in a manner forced down the throats of people who have not wit enough to cry for themselves, but are content to allow others to do the Town Crier's office for them. The Jews of old cried out for Barabbas, and they got him, and much good he did them, it is to be presumed, when Titus came to knock their Temple about their ears. Barabbas, although a robber, may have been what is termed a "popular man," a jovial rascal, a free-handed scoundrel, a kind of Judaical Robin Hood, who, while he deploiled the wealthy Pharisee, or stole Dives' plate, would fling a penny or so to Lazarus, lying with dogs in the gate. Have we not people nowadays who look upon Robin Hood as rather a good fellow than otherwise, a belted earl in disguise, the confounder of hypocrites, the protector of the oppressed, and so forth? Are not the half-mythical adventures of a vagabond, who, if he ever existed, was probably a barorous and bloodthirsty marauder, still a favourite theme for the fancier's pen and the artist's pencil? It was as logical a thing to mire Barabbas as Robin. Both, no doubt, were essentially "bold" fellows.

We have always been a yelping generation, and we must have our cry. "*Hierosolyma est perdita!*" roar the Crusaders; and Jerusalem is lost indeed, for a Turkish pasha still holds sway in the Holy City, and the Palestine Exploration Fund are sending round the begging-box with but scant success. "*Moriamur pro rege nostro!*" yell the grand-children of the Batthyany and Pulskis, whom within our time Haynau hanged and Francis Joseph exiled for rebellion. "Give us back our seven Days!" screeches the eighteenth century; and in the nineteenth are laughing at the Russians, who begin their Christmas eleven years after us. "No Popery!" has been a capital cry in its time. By means Newgate was burnt, and Lord Mansfield's house gutted, and Lord George Gordon went mad; but the Pope is alive and merry at age on eighty year, dipping his nose in the Montefiasconian wine; and the heart of Mr. Whalley is still desolated to think that the unasking of the confessional does not convert persons of that way of thinking from their sad errors. Are you old enough to remember the "to help me God" speech of H.R.H. the Duke of York, the gentleman who didn't pay his tradesmen, and allowed his mistress to sell commissions in the army? Our fathers had that speech printed in letters of

gold. The Duke was for a time the Protestant Champion, and his blasphemous commonplace became a Cry. At the present day it is of no more account than "Lillibullero." Lillibullero! It is said to have whistled James II. out of three kingdoms. I heard the tune on Boxing-night, adjusted to some comical words in Mr. Blanchard's pantomime at Drury Lane Theatre, and the lady sitting next to me asked if the tune was "Not for Joseph," or "Champagne Charley."

Mr. Benjamin Disraeli, than whom there is not a shrewder man in Europe, invented an admirable Cry in his novel of *Coningsby*. It was "Our young Queen and our old Institutions." It did not mean anything in particular; for Queen Victoria could no more help being young in 1838 than her uncle William, just dead, had been able to help being old. As for our "old Institutions," they might have been the stake, or the rack, or the whipping-post, or the Admiralty Droits, or the Exchequer tallies; but the cry sounded well, and saved people the trouble of thinking. Which is all that is wanted in a cry. Had Mr. Disraeli "stumped" the county of Bucks on that "platform," he might have achieved a triumph at High Wycombe, instead of being branded by Daniel O'Connell (than whom no politician ever better understood the value of a senseless Cry) as a "lineal descendant of the Impenitent Thief." But Mr. Disraeli was not a Radical in those days, and more inclined to cry, "Flare up, and join the Union" (a most popular Cry in its time), than "Our young Queen and our old Institutions."

It is erroneously supposed that the downfall of Napoleon the Great was wholly due to the defeat at Waterloo. That the rout at Mont St. Jean had something to do with the hero's collapse is certain; but unprejudiced persons will tell you that his unpopularity in the provinces in 1814-15 was mainly caused by the convenient cry, "*Plus de Droits Réunis!*" The *Droits Réunis* were a kind of consolidated assessed taxes, which the peasantry imagined to be very onerous. The Bourbons changed the name of the impost, and made it ten times more grinding; but the Cry had been deprived of its resonance, and that was something. By 1830 the people had learnt a new Cry, and cried Charles X. to Holyrood with it. The value of a Cry not meaning anything, was very amusingly shown in this same country of France, during the occupation of Paris by the Allies. One *vaudevilliste* wagered with another that he would introduce among the couplets in a farce a stanza of perfect nonsense which should still be accepted as sense, and even become popular. He wrote:

"Non, la valeur n'est pas la vaillance,
Trente revers valent-ils un succès?
La France, quoique ça sera toujours la France,
Et les Français seront toujours Français!"

This magnificent doggerel took the town tremendously. The farce ran a hundred nights, and "Les Français seront toujours Français" passed into a Cry.

And this mention of a dramatic Cry brings me to the immediate theme on which I purpose to discourse. The number of Cries which have been heard in all ages in the history of literature and art would be amazing, did we not remember that artists and men of letters are human, and that humanity must have its howl. It is as the air it breathes. If it have it not, it dies. Now the followers of St. Bernard raise a cry against the followers of Abelard. "Down with the Pagan school!" they vociferate. The "Pagan school" is a good Cry. *Blackwood* gets up a Cry against Leigh Hunt and Hazlitt because they have the misfortune to live at Hampstead or in Tothill-fields. "Down with the Cockney school!" squalls *Edinburgh*; and the writer of the finest artistic and literary criticisms we possess is termed a "moon-struck idiot;" and the author of *Rimini* is bidden to "go hang himself in his fetid leather-braces." The "Lakers" had previously had their turn because Wordsworth happened to live at Grassmere, and Coleridge came often to see him. Then the *Courier* tries to put down Cobbett by calling his *Register* "twopenny trash." Old Sergeant William, however, fully appreciated the market-value of a Cry, and taking "Twopenny Trash" as the title of a pamphlet, mauled the *Courier* till it howled again like a cadger under the lash of the beadle. Dr. Southey, having been laughed at by Lord Byron, thought utterly to crush that noble poet by calling him the chief of the "Satanic school;" and virtuous papas and mammas all over the kingdom sternly resolved not to allow their daughters to read "Satanic poetry." But nine-tenths of what Southey wrote has passed long since into "the portion of weeds and outworn faces;" and Mr. Murray is still making a very good thing, annually, out of Lord Byron's copyrights.

A sedition, a revolt, a revolution almost, was accomplished in the French Republic of letters by the famous quarrels between the Classicists and the Romanticists. The former, fanatics of the hair-powder and pig-tail school, enthusiastic followers of Delille and Ducis, and Baour-Lormian, of Châteaubriand and Bernardin de St. Pierre, and the Vicomte d'Arlincourt, had on their side the court, the aristocracy, the clergy, and the magistracy. They dispensed places, pensions, commands, official eulogies, fashionable patronage. They kept guard at the portals of the Academy, and in the antechambers of the Tuileries. The chiefs of the Romantic school were young men who did not cut their hair; who dined for twenty-five sous in cheap cook-shops in the Marais; who lived *au cinquième*, and were often unable to pay their rent. They were, in fine, what we call "Bohemians" nowadays: and what an excellent cry is "Bohemianism"! And what a Bohemian was Napoleon Buonaparte the uncle, when he had no boots, and sponged on Talma the actor for a dinner; and Napoleon Buonaparte the nephew, when he lived on the second floor in King-street, St. James's, and flew "kites" of the sixty-per-cent order! What a Bohemian was the editor of the *Quintessential Review*, when he wrote Last Dying Speeches for

Catnach, and breakfasted on a penny-bun and a glass of gin! Among these early Bohemians were such men as Victor Hugo, as Alexander Dumas the elder, as Théophile Gautier, and as Frédéric Soulié. The well-dressed, well-housed, well-pensioned, well-powdered, well-pigtailed Classicists tried to put their opponents down with a Cry. "*A bas les ennemis de la famille!*" they bellowed. The Romanticists were accused of attempts to undermine the social structure, to bring the Ten Commandments into contempt, and to further lawsuits *en séparation de corps et de biens*. In their desperation the Classicists even dug up the corpse of wicked old Voltaire—forgetting, or desiring to forget, how shrilly he had piped "*Ecrasons l'infame!*" a Cry which has generally tended to crush the Crier—and strove to galvanise him as a Conservative classic. At least "Zaïre" was classical; at least "Œdipe" was decorous. They forgot all about "La Pucelle" and "La Raison par Alphabet."

The French Romanticists were not to be put down by a Cry, however vehemently bawled; and "Notre Dame de Paris" and "Ray Blas," "Christine" and "Les trois Mousquetaires," "Mademoiselle de Maupin" and "Ni jamais ni toujours," passed into the French language, and became part and parcel of it; not to be eradicated therefrom till Rabelais ceases to divert, and Montaigne to delight, and La Fontaine to enchant, and Racine to command, and Bossuet to astound. Classicism—as classicism was understood by the powder-and-pigtail school, who knew no more than a grammar-school gerund-grinder does of the real beauties of ancient literature—died the death, and the latest champion of the Classicists has been compelled to defend his own hypothesis by writing such "Romantic" stories as *Sibylle* and *M. de Camors*.

From the commonwealth of Literature the revolution spread through the empire of Art. There was a tremendously classical school of painting, of which David had been the high-priest. It is true that this man was in early youth a Jacobin, a friend of Robespierre, who had set up his easel at the foot of the guillotine; that he had been driven out of France by the Bourbons at the Restoration as next-door to a regicide; but, although he ended in exile, he was a baron; he was decorated with many orders; he had painted a picture of a coronation. The subjects of most of his other paintings—vilely cold, meagre, chalky, inane, lifeless as they were—had been suggested by "cribs" from the *Iliad* and the *Æneid*. When he had been dead some fifteen years, the red nightcap of the *sans-culotte* was forgotten in the lustre of the baronial coronet, and David was numbered among the respectables. When Delaroche, when Delacroix began to paint their vigorous, breathing pictures,—when the "Death of Elizabeth," the "Princes in the Tower," "Cromwell looking on the body of Charles I.," and "The Massacre of Scio" began to show the French people that there was something more within the scope of high art than "Orestes pursued by the Eumenides," or the "Sacrifice of Iphigenia,"

—the pictorial Classicists raised a doleful Cry. The people who were in love with every gawky Achilles, every hulking Brutus, every Demosthenes swaddled in a wet tablecloth, every Dejanira poisoning herself on tiptoe, every Orpheus playing on an impossible fiddle, every plagiarism which David and his scholars had perpetrated from the Sistine chapel, or the Loggie and Stanze of the Vatican, looked with horror upon paintings representing real events, and in which the actors were attired in the real costume of the period. They were not even to be consoled by the half classicists—Ingres and Ary Scheffer. At any peril, those pestilent Delaroches and Delacroix must be put down. So they invented a Cry against them, "*A bas l'école des brigands!*"—they shouted, "Down with the bandit school!" The only possible pigtail idea of a brigand was Cacus stealing cows in a Greek helmet and inlaid greaves. Still, the Romantic painters were not to be put down by cries, by detraction, by abuse, by discouragement, by the refusal of government patronage, or otherwise. They had their victory at last, in the Hemicycle of the Ecole des Beaux Arts—in the first places on the "line" in the national collection being awarded to "Romantic" pictures, and in the relegation of the "classic *chefs-d'œuvre*" of David to the obscurest nooks and corners of the Louvre.

May I whisper in the reader's ear that the agitation against "Romanticism" in literature and art in France was an exactly analogous outcry to that with which we are now deafened in England against "Sensationalism"? But ere I take up that Cry of cries, and strive to show what a hollow, windy, worthless ululation it is, I wish to say a few words concerning a Cry as worthless, which immediately preceded it.

Mr. Charles Dickens has enjoyed European, world-wide fame for thirty years. I have watched his career as narrowly as I have watched it admiringly; and I think I have read every line he has written, and have been enabled to trace with sufficient accuracy the successive phases of development through which his genius has passed, the mellowing of his faculties, the chastening of his style, and their gradual culmination into a splendid but sober afternoon of intellect. He is probably, at this moment, the best-known and the most deservedly popular author in the world; and in the very first number of the very next serial in the familiar old green cover which he might publish, we should probably be constrained to admit that there was something—in the way of character or of description—as good as, if not better than, Charles Dickens had ever done before. Yet, having a pretty retentive memory, and having been all my life more or less intimately connected with what are called "literary circles," I can perfectly well recollect that, in the year 1842—and we are now, I take it, in 1868—there was no commoner cry in "polite society" than that "Dickens had written himself out." There used to be a man called Croker, who had something to do with the Admiralty, and didn't know where Russell-square was, and wrote *scurrilous articles* in the *Quarterly Review*, especially delighting

when it was upon a woman's shoulders that he could lay his dirty lash. You see that a woman is more vascular than a man. You can fetch the blood sooner from her than from us tough brutes, and *she can't hit back again*. This Croker did his best to scarify Lady Morgan; but he himself has been pilloried to deathless infamy by Mr. Disraeli in *Coningsby*, and by Mr. Thackeray in *Vanity Fair*. He did almost every conceivable variety of bad and base thing, but he sometimes said a good one. In the first bright dawn of Charles Dickens's fame, Croker observed that the author of *Pickwick* had "gone up like a rocket, but would come down like the stick." This was "sack and sugar" to the charitable souls who were so fond of repeating that "Boz" had "written himself out." "Boz" wrote the *Old Curiosity Shop*, and pending the appearance of his next book the charitable souls reported that he had gone raving mad. He went to America, and the charitable souls put it about that he was dead. He wrote *Martin Chuzzlewit*, and the charitable souls declared that there was "a great falling off in his style." He went to Italy, and the charitable souls hinted that he had pawned his plate to raise funds for the voyage. There was no end to the malice of the charitable souls. *Dombey*, *Copperfield*, *Bleak House*, *Hard Times*, the *Two Cities*, *Great Expectations*, *Our Mutual Friend*, were all asserted to be infinitely inferior to their predecessors; but somehow the man went on writing, and enlisting fresh tens of thousands of readers with every new book he wrote. And yet about this time of the New Year the rocket is soaring high over the State of Pennsylvania, and the stick hasn't come down at all, save perhaps in the form of a stick of cheerful disdain, which has hit the charitable souls over the nose badly.

The only wonder is that the charitable souls have failed to discover that among modern "sensational" writers Mr. Charles Dickens is perhaps the most thoroughly, and has been from the very outset of his career the most persistently, "sensational" writer of the age. There is sensation even in *Pickwick*: the "Madman" and the "Stroller's" story, the death of the "Chancery Prisoner," and the episode of the "Queer Client," for example. The *Old Curiosity Shop* is replete with sensation, from the extravagant pilgrimage of Nell and the old man to the death of Quilp. *Barnaby Rudge* begins with the sensation of an undiscovered murder, and ends with the sensation of a triple hanging and a duel *à mort*. In *Nicholas Nickleby* the end of Mr. Ralph Nickleby and the shooting of Lord Frederick Verisopht by Sir Mulberry Hawk are sensational enough to suit the strongest appetite. And the murder of Tigg Montague by Jonas Chuzzlewit; and the mysterious husband of Miss Betsy Trotwood in *David Copperfield*; and the convict millionaire in *Great Expectations*; and the grinding of the "National Razor" in the *Tale of Two Cities*; and Monks's confession, and the murder of Nancy, and the death of Sykes, in *Oliver Twist*; and finally, the spontaneous combustion in *Bleak House*; and the tumbling down

of the house in *Little Dorrit*; and Mr. Carker's death in *Dombey and Son*. Are not all these pure "sensation"?

When the charitable souls had found out that the rocket-and-stick cry was growing stale, they discovered that Mr. Dickens, being a young man with a thoroughly new style, had become the founder of a new school, and that he had for his disciples many young men whose intellects were growing with his growth and strengthening with his strength; although at that necessary distance which should always, in the subordination of mind, separate Master from Scholar. Giulio Romano, in the outset of his career, was the imitative disciple of Raffaele Sanzio. He was adjudged worthy to fill-in the master's sketches—nay, even to touch upon his works. But Giulio never pretended to reach Raffaele's height; and, in process of time, he found that he could do something by his own motion and power, and ceased to imitate, and achieved a very sufficing, although less exalted, celebrity as head-master of his own school—the Giulio-Romanesque. Now, among those who sat at the feet of Charles Dickens early in his career was a bright, earnest, active-minded young man named Albert Smith. This very talented writer had become, to a certain extent, imbued with Mr. Dickens's style and spirit, and perhaps with a few of Mr. Dickens's mannerisms; but he addressed himself to the description of many departments of life on which Mr. Dickens had never touched. He was a traveller and a linguist. He had been classically and professionally educated, whereas the Master had enjoyed only the ordinary commercial schooling, and had been brought up to nothing particular until, learning shorthand writing, he gained admission to the gallery of the House of Commons as a newspaper-reporter. All these things told ultimately on the intellectual development of Albert Smith. He ceased after a time to imitate. He felt himself strong enough to work alone. He carved out a path for himself, and pursued it steadily and successfully until the end. But, while he was still *in statu pupillari*, no abuse could be too foul to be lavished on him by the charitable souls. His works were spoken of habitually as the "washings of Dickens's inkstand;" and he was nicknamed "Albata Smith"—a kind of Sheffield substitute for the Pickwickian silver.

When Albert, by his pluck and perseverance, asserted the real *vim* which was in him, the charitable souls became alive to the fact that if their Cry was to hold, it must be fastened on other victims; so, when Mr. Dickens started *Household Words*, and successively gathered round him as contributors such young men as James Hannay, Blanchard Jerrold, Robert Brough, Walter Thornbury, and, later, John Hollingshead, the cry was raised against these gentlemen that they were each and all "slavish imitators of Dickens"—mere clients and convenient men of the great patron. This Cry died out as these young gentlemen grew middle-aged, and found that they could do something for themselves. For a while there was rather a cessation in literary Cries. A temporary

onslaught was made on William Russell when he went to the Crimea, on the score that he wrote "for effect" in lieu of penning despatches in the good old Adjutant-General's-office style ; but when it was found that the "flashy letters"—they were called "flashy"—of the Special Correspondent of the *Times* had saved a whole army from destruction, the charitable souls (having relatives who had starved and rotted in the force before Sebastopol) desisted for very shame from barking at his heels. Still it was necessary to have a Cry.

"Shout, my brother Decamisado ;
 Shirtless brother, come shout with me ;
 What shall we shout for, what shall we shout for,
 In this year of grace Thirty-three !"

Thus wrote Dr. Maginn. Society experienced a similar want of a shout in '57 or '58, for I take the existing *jödel* to be about ten years old. The charitable souls could make nothing of Mr. Thackeray, though by a side-wind of clamour they tried to get up a Cry against the Cynical school. They could make nothing of Mr. Carlyle, seeing that the Sage of Chelsea had a way with him of getting the head of a libeller into chancery, and pummelling it with scornful words till it was as big as a pumpkin. So they devised a new term, and discovered a new mare's-nest, and told a new lie, and found the realisation of all their wishes in "Sensationalism."

What is Sensationalism, and who is Sensational? I will strive to tell you. The late Mr. William Shakespeare was an arrant sensational writer. He wrote the play of "Macbeth," which is founded mainly on murder and witchcraft. He wrote "Hamlet," in which there are many murders, a suicide, a suspicion of madness, and a ghost. He wrote "Othello," in which there is jealousy, and also murder. He wrote "King Lear," in which you will find murder, blindness, and madness. He wrote "Anthony and Cleopatra," in which there is suicide. He wrote "Julius Cæsar," in which there is murder and a ghost. He wrote "Richard the Third," in which there are no end of murders and no end of ghosts. He wrote "Romeo and Juliet," in which luxuriate poison, murder, and premature interment. He wrote the "Merchant of Venice," in which there is robbery and elopement, and an attempt on the part of a Jew bill-discounter to cut open the stomach of a Christian gentleman. The late M. de Voltaire highly objected to Shakespeare's sensationalism. He called him *un barbare grotesque*. He preferred murder *à la Grecque*, when you only hear the slaughtered Agamemnon groaning behind the scenes. He liked Peloponnesian adultery, Heracleidan seduction, and Attic incest. Ben Jonson, Beaumont, Fletcher, were not sensational writers. Ben's most sensational play, "The Alchemist," is made up of the humours of a conjuror, a swindler, and a woman of the town. Desdemona is sensational ; Doll Common is not so. Beaumont and Fletcher depicted the "humours" of their age with strength, richness, and raciness ; they represented the manners of their time with

pliancy, variety, and fidelity; but their plays were plays of Manners, and not of Human Nature. They were plays of Garments, and not of the Life within. So was it with the later comedy-writers. What has become of Etherege's "Love in a Tub," and Wycherley's "Gentleman Dancing-master," and Rowe's "Biter"? Where are Shirley, Vanbrugh, Congreve, and Farquhar? Where is Foote even? There is but one play by Massinger, the "Virgin Martyr," and one by Marlowe, the "Jew of Malta," that has survived almost utter oblivion. They are both "sensational;" that is to say, they treat of Life and Passion. The Elizabethan dramas of Manners are all dead. Who, save book-worms, reads the "Scornful Lady," or the "Custom of the Country," or the "Beggar's Bush," or the "Humorous Lientenant," or the "Little French Lawyer," or the "Laws of Candy"? Who knows much about "The Fox," or the "New Inn," or the "Staple of News"? Yet the people who wrote these things were cried up by self-conceited wits and sages as infinitely superior to Shakespeare. Have they kept possession of the stage? Will they ever obtain possession of the stage again? Away from bookmen's shelves, the whole rout of them are as dead and gone as a chandler-shopkeeper's ledger of the year before last.

In the opinion of dolts and dullards and envious backbiters, everything is "sensational" that is vivid, and nervous, and forcible, and graphic, and true. There is no sensation in the wretched daubs of Benjamin West, or the heartless tea-tray varnishing of Mengs; but there is most deleterious sensationalism in Fuseli, and Hogarth, and Goya. Miguel de Cervantes wrote sensationally, but Gongora would have scorned the act. Camoens was sensational, but Lousada was "classic." Wedgwood was a sensational potter, and Flaxman a sensational sculptor. The revival of wood-engraving was a "sensation" as bitterly deprecated by the old admirers of namby-pamby stipple and woolly mezzotint, as vaccination was piously denounced by the advocates of inoculation, or better still by letting the smallpox have its own way. The *Grub-street Journal* and the *Daily Intelligencer* were not sensational papers. The *Telegraph*, the *Standard*, and the *Star* are clearly sensational. Mr. Millais is a sensational painter, so is Mr. Holman Hunt. Mr. Woolner is a sensational sculptor; Mr. Ruskin's art-criticisms are sensational; Mr. Darwin is a sensational philosopher; Mr. Fechter is a sensational actor; Mr. Spurgeon is a sensational preacher; Dr. Cumming is a sensational theologian; so, from another point of view, is Dr. Newman; so, from another point, is Professor Maurice. As for Mr. Kingsley, as poet, novelist, parson, and historian, he was always sensational. *Belgravia* is a sensational magazine, and Miss Braddon is a dreadfully sensational novelist. M. Nélaton is a sensational surgeon; M. Edmond About a sensational wit; Napoleon III. a sensational sovereign; and Graf von Bismark a sensational statesman. As for Garibaldi, he was never more than a sensational patriot; and it was only

General Grant's sensational obduracy that caused the Southern Confederacy to collapse.

This is the Cry, this is the yelp, this is the howl, in which the dailies and the dolts and the backbiters revel. Suppose that the sensible portion of society consented just for a season to lay down their arms, their pens, and their pencils, and allowed the non-sensationalists to have their way? No more sensation plays, no more sensation poems—by the way, *Maud* is glaringly sensational, and so is *Enoch Arden*—no more sensation novels, no more sensation leading-articles, no more sensation pictures, no more sensation sermons, no more sensation speeches. Let us go back to the calmly dull, to the tranquilly inane, to the timorously decorous, to the sweetly stupid. Let some new Macaulay—the old one was a sensational historian—take up the narrative left us by Thomas Babington, and write: "Her most gracious Majesty, Queen Anne, was a very good Queen. She was much attached to the Church of England. Her Consort was called Prince George of Denmark. He was a great donkey, and used to get drunk. Queen Anne was very fond of good eating. She was very clever at making cordials. She had a famous general, whose name was Churchill. The French called him Malbrook. He won the battle of Blenheim for her. Queen Anne is dead." There, if that be not classical, I know not what is. There are very few words of more than two syllables in this non-sensational excerpt. Or let our novels be on the model of the *Grand Cyrus* or *Belisarius*. Let leading-articles begin, "They write from Vienna that the Emperor refuses to treat, and that the Great Turk is likely to give some trouble on the Danube." In lieu of reports of debates in Parliament, let us have "Conversations in the Senate of Blefuscu." Let our Royal Academicians turn coach-painters, or cut out profiles in black sticking-plaster; let Mr. Phelps play Macbeth in the uniform of a captain in the Guards; and the Bishop of London, in a wig like a bird's-nest, preach a sermon in St. Paul's against photography and the Electric Telegraph. Don't let us move, don't let us travel, don't let us hear or see anything; but let us write sonnets to Chloë, and play madrigals on the spinet, and dance minuets, and pray to Heaven against Sensationalism, the Pope, the Devil, and the Pretender; and then let Dulness reign triumphant, and Universal Darkness cover all.



BRIC-A-BRAC HUNTING

BY MAJOR H. BYNG HALL

QUEST THE FOURTH

ST. PETERSBURG

I CANNOT say that I sat me down on the banks of the Neva and wept. With my pipe in my mouth I reclined in an easy arm-chair on a balcony which overlooked that wide and flowing river, and pictured to my mind what it must be in midwinter, when that blue and rushing expanse of water is converted into a broad and ice-bound high-road; in which state it has been my lot so very many times since to behold it. And here permit me to remark that every chapter of my bric-à-brac wanderings is written in the actual place, often on the very spot of which I speak.

There was a time, which appears but yesterday, so few the years—I might say the months—which have elapsed, when he who desired to visit the city of the Czar had occasion to brace up his nerves and to call alike on his physical powers and his patience; for the journey by land from the Prussian frontier, whether in midsummer or in midwinter, was one of intolerable fatigue and discomfort, the only choice of evils being between death from intense cold, and suffocation from intense heat, without one spot of interest or beauty to vary the monotony of the way. If railway travelling, however, be not to the majority, as it is to me, more fatiguing than posting, matters are greatly improved; for justice and truth compel me to admit that Russian railways, if they are slow and constantly on the halt—more for the benefit of the owners of the buffets than the convenience or gastronomic indulgence of travellers—are replete with comfort—more so, indeed, than those of any other nation in which it has been my good or evil fortune to journey. But here we are in that vast capital, where the magnificent statue of its founder, the great Peter, turns his horse's tail towards the colossal gilded dome of St. Isaac's, a mighty city, built, at the cost of millions, on a foundation of piles, which the public voice declares already to be sinking. However, as regards Petersburg and its palaces and museums and monasteries, I must refer my readers to other pages; I invite them to take a walk, provided they are in good physical condition, in search of bric-à-brac. The exchange, an event of rare occurrence, is at nine roubles the pound sterling at the moment I write these lines; so that, spite of the absurd price generally asked for articles, good, bad, and indifferent, we may chance to make a few good bargains.

Ten years since, in the days when Russian railways were not, and

upsets in snowstorms were as common as telegrams, the capital of All the Russias was—I mean no pun—a capital place for bric-à-brac; and here and there is still to be found much that is worthy of the collector's researches. But, alas, at St. Petersburg, as elsewhere, that which might once have been secured for a rouble is now difficult to obtain for a pound. I suggest to the connoisseur who first visits the city of the Czar to select some friend, if he has one, who speaks the language—in default of a friend, pay an interpreter—and then drive to the porcelain manufactory, situated about four versts (or three miles) from the city. I do not say the drive is a pleasant one, far from it; but without trouble, and the exercise of patience and endurance, there is seldom much to be gained. So submit cheerfully to be bumped for two miles over an ill-paved city, and to be rebumped for two more over the vilest of roads. Even should you require a sheet of diachylon plaster on your return, you will neither regret the pain nor the outlay.

The manufactory in question, which commenced under the auspices of Catharine, has existed for more than a century, and is still under the protection of the empire. In other days, previous to the reduction of duties on foreign importations, which now fill the market, it did a thriving home trade. Even now, I cannot speak too highly either of the workmen or of the work produced in the factory. True, there is little originality of taste or design; but the copies, particularly those of figures and groups, taken from models of Dresden, Berlin, and elsewhere, are equal to, and in some measure more accurate and life-like, as well as more delicate in outline and effect, than those produced in later days either at Meissen or the royal manufactory of the latter city, and infinitely cheaper. For the most part they are uncoloured; but the glaze is very clear and smooth; and I have been fortunate enough to obtain some specimens worthy of, and equal to, any of the productions in Europe. The painting—generally, I fancy, the work of German artists—is equally beautiful; and some vases and *déjeuners* sent to the Exhibitions of 1851 and 1862 in England, and which were unfortunately returned in some measure broken, were magnificent specimens of the ceramic art. A little more originality—figures and forms possessing more nationality of character—is all that is wanting to enable the produce of the Russian imperial factory to vie with the ceramic *chefs-d'œuvre* of present and past ages.

There are few of what may be fairly termed bric-à-brac shops in Petersburg,—in fact, the only two I know of, where *objets d'art*, as they are termed, may be found, and to which I can recommend a visit with the hope of any successful result, are those of Messrs. Negri and G. Tognolati; the former on the Nevsky Prospect, the latter at No. 39 Kamenney Ostrowskey Prospect. Mr. Negri is a most obliging, agreeable person to deal with; and I must do him the justice to say that I have on more than one occasion purchased from him some exquisite Wedgwood medallions, as also some small but choice speci-

mens of Sèvres, Vienna, and Berlin china, at a very reasonable outlay. Mr. Tognolati, an Italian,—who has recently left the city for what may be termed the immediate environs, and combines his dealings in *objets d'art* with the fabrication of macaroni, in both of which pursuits, to all appearance, he is successful,—has also occasionally some fine specimens of carved furniture, and is always ready and obliging in showing what he has to the stranger, even should no purchases be made. He looks for rather higher gains than Mr. Negri. A packet of paper roubles will not go far with either gentleman, however.

But though Negri's and Tognolati's are the only real bric-à-brac shops of which I have any practical knowledge, there is a vast field for the hunter alike in Petersburg and Moscow, though it has never as yet been my good fortune to visit the latter city. But in order to avoid the beaten track of dealers, it is necessary to get introductions to private houses in company with someone who knows the language well. In such cases your hunting-field is full, or rather was full, of game ; and courtesy of manner, combined with attention, may then enable you, without offence, to be a purchaser, though the seller be not exactly a dealer. In this manner, some years since, I became the possessor of two of the finest Wedgwood vases of their kind I have ever seen, and which, being then in my apprenticeship, I subsequently sold for about a sixth of their worth to a friend who had a valuable collection of that beautiful ware. This was one of the lessons I learnt : from that time a Wedgwood vase has risen a hundred per cent in my estimation. It is almost inconceivable what a vast quantity of Wedgwood found its way to the city of the Czar. Doubtless very much still remains, if it could be discovered, though much of it may not exactly be for sale. Sèvres, however, of the finest quality and period, Dresden and Berlin and Viennese porcelain, still remains in great quantities. The palaces are full of it. The museum has some lovely specimens ; and the active and energetic hunters, with time, means, and experience, still do so much, that I believe the first-class dealers of Bond-street, such as Messrs. Dulache, Davis, and others, are wont to endure a journey to St. Petersburg, if not annually, at no very long intervals, in search of treasures ; and, if report speak truly, they never return empty-handed, and bring their richest prizes from Moscow.

I possess the adventurous hunter-spirit, and always decide on chasing my game home wherever to be found, whether in the woods and broadlands of my fatherland, or on foreign shores. In like manner, I never allow a chance to escape me when in search of bric-à-brac, always bearing in mind that, whether in the humblest shop or in the most magnificent repository of *objets d'art*, something may be discovered, oftentimes more successfully in the former than the latter. On these grounds I unhesitatingly accepted the suggestion of a friend who proposed to take me to the private residence of a Circassian lady, who had a small but choice collection which she was courteous enough

to show to her friends, and with which, of course, she had no desire to part. Nevertheless, like all other collectors, after some trifling fencing and interchanging of courtesies, it appeared that she had no objection to dispose of her treasures in a dear market, she having purchased them in a cheap one. Introductions over, a glance around the room—which was sufficiently spacious, but, like most Russian houses, lightly furnished, with here and there a gorgeous highly-gilded arm-chair or sofa, and with little apparent comfort—I cast my longing eyes on some ceramic treasures with which a cabinet was filled, and we commenced business. Meanwhile I had truly been informed that my hostess was not a dealer. Looking on her with a practical eye, her portrait may be thus drawn: age about seventy; rather sharp and prominent features; the remnant of what might have been teeth; a tongue which surpassed any tongue (pardon me, ladies!) that I had ever previously listened to, so excessive was its volubility. The weather was hot, and her costume appeared to me to consist simply of a somewhat dirty cotton dressing-gown. How was I, then, a stranger in Russia, seeking to secure some of her Sèvres cups, to know that I was not dealing with a Mrs. Brown or Mrs. Jones? So, silently, I examined and appraised the treasures set before my longing eyes, wondering how the lady, as I had been told she was, should have had such good taste and knowledge as to gather them together, and such bad taste as to present herself in that dirty and discoloured dress in the presence of visitors. Here and there I selected some choice specimen which I was desirous to purchase, but which, for the most part, she declined to sell. At length, wearied by her continued refusals and constant chatter, I seized on two charming cups, and, without further comment, placed golden sovereigns by their side. She clutched the coins, and I thought the battle won; but then appealing to my companion in the Russian tongue (unknown to me) she replaced the money on the table. "You must give another half-sovereign," said he, smiling. Anxious to have the treasures, which were really very beautiful, I gave the required addition, and forthwith the sovereigns descended to some hidden pocket in the cotton dressing-gown. The cups were mine. My friend also obtained a cup; and after innumerable shakings of hands, bows, and adieux, we parted, not without expressions on the lady's part to the effect that she hoped we should repeat our visit at some future time.

No sooner were we on our drosky than my companion burst into fits of laughter.

"What's the joke?" I inquired.

"Joke? Why, your consummate coolness with the old lady!"

"Lady?" I replied.

"Yes," said he; "a Circassian princess; and her son, who was so anxious to sell that vase which she refused, a Circassian prince."

"Well," said I, "we parted on the most amicable terms, and,

princess or no princess, she is the hardest hand at a bargain, and has the most lively tongue, I ever had the honour to encounter."

I have sketched this little matutinal farce simply to remark that there are a variety of Circassian or other princesses in Petersburg equally desirous of fair barter; and, time and opportunity presenting themselves, I have no doubt that the field for the bric-à-brac hunter is vast and full of treasures.

But there is another and most interesting locale to which I have not yet alluded. I must describe it in detail. It is termed "Vshyvio-Rynok," or, in plain English, the Louse Market. During the year 1862 the whole of this immense market was destroyed by fire. The tremendous conflagration may be readily conceived when I state that the place was entirely composed of wooden buildings, for the most part filled with combustible matter, ranging from valuable pictures and furniture to old rags, tar, oil, and pitch. The fire commenced at 4 P.M., and was burning till the midday following. During this tremendous fire property of all kinds was ruthlessly cast into a canal; thus books, china, pictures, silk, eastern shawls, and objects of untold value, were destroyed and lost for ever; and what had been one of the richest and finest places of the city was in a few hours converted into one vast smoking heap of ashes. It was, indeed, a perfect wreck. Here and there casks of nails, pots, pans, and copper zamovars, or Russian tea-urns, were all melted up together; in another part, where crockery and china merchants had exhibited their wares, plates and dishes by the dozen were consumed *en masse*, so intense was the heat. A portion of one dozen I have now in my possession. It was, indeed, a sad scene of ruin and destruction. Scarcely anything was saved. Splendid Sèvres, Dresden, clocks of great value, and bric-à-brac collected for years in every mart in Europe and the East, jewels, Cashmere shawls, Lyons silk—all one heap of ashes.

The original market—which was as old as the city—was, in fact, simply a bazaar of great extent, in which were exhibited for sale articles from the world at large, and in which every purchaser, from the highest to the lowest, could suit himself on reasonable terms.

LONDON PALACES

BY WALTER THORNBURY

I. St. James's Palace

Do our readers remember that fourth scene of the *Rake's Progress*, which Hogarth intends as the beginning of the end? The *lune de miel* has past; of the bitterest *fiel* is the moon now dominant over his house of life. Just opposite the two grimy red-brick gate-towers that still stand at the bottom of St. James's-street, two rough bull-dog bailiffs, with hard hands and harder bludgeons only too ready for work, have pounced on the beau's sedan. The powdered lack-brain, on his way to a levee in the old palace, has stepped out daintily on tiptoe, for fear of the mud, as Joe Stoppem, or Paddy, one of the Irish chairmen, has lifted up the lid of the sedan to let out the bird shortly to be closer caged. The bailiff's hand will be on him in a moment, for it is inevitable as King Death's—the fatal writ waves before his eyes. The poor milliner's girl, still purer than many puritan Pharisees, and more innocent than many duchesses, is dropping her box of patches, or wedding-favours, in her eagerness to purchase the release of her unworthy betrayer. A slovenly lamplighter on a ladder, filling a street-lamp, is all this time slopping his filthy oil over the beau's wig; while down the street stalks a tall, meagre, old Welsh baronet, with a leek stuck defiantly in his hat because it is St. David's-day, which is also the birthday of Queen Caroline, George II.'s queen.

That old dark-red gateway, which Hogarth sketched, and Holbein designed, is exactly the same now as when George I. used to pass through it in his gilt and lacquered sedan-chair, with his six footmen (some of them Germans, depend upon it) pacing pompously before, acting up to their Bartholomew-Fair ideal of royalty, and six yeomen of the guard marching on a level with the windows. Behind, in ponderous coaches—perfect Noah's arks on wheels—came the gentlemen of the bed-chamber and the gentlemen ushers. The king is perhaps going to open Parliament, or is bound to some great anti-Jacobite dinner at the Guildhall.

On other days King George would be in the Mall, attended only by half-a-dozen yeomen of the guard. In those days of danger and of privilege, Divine Right showed itself often among its subjects, careless of Jacobite rapiers and Jacobite bullets. If you had looked in at the sedan windows, you would have seen, boxed up in his chair, the German gentleman dropped upon us by Providence: a little, pale, elderly man, with an ugly pinched nose, and a depressed, rather cross mouth. He wears a dark tie-wig, a plain coat, waistcoat and breeches of stuff.

coloured cloth, and stockings of the same unpropitious colour. Across the breast of his snuff-coloured coat passes the broad blue ribbon.

It is with the memory of this reserved, cold, silent, gross-minded king that St. James's Palace is specially associated. It was his favourite residence, as Kensington was of William and Queen Anne, and Windsor of George III. The history of a palace should not be a mere catalogue of rooms, measurement of windows, or a bailiff's list of buhl tables and Louis-Quatorze chairs; the blue room and the yellow chamber do not, *per se*, interest us much, when they have never been seen by us, and probably never will be. But the memories that haunt those rooms, and the palace-roof that covers them, have a perennial charm for us; for the personal character of kings is too little touched upon in history, and it is always useful to gauge the hearts and minds of the governing class taken in their culminating types. We will endeavour, by anecdote and comment, to prove the common humanity of kings, and to show that while they sometimes succumb to the urgings of temptation, they also not unfrequently rise into virtue. It is with the personality of George I. that we have here to deal; his political character we leave to the historians, who may explain it as they will; suffice it to say that it turned pretty generally on enriching Hanover, the probabilities of his hurried return thither being for a long time present to his mind. Every event here recorded has been thought of in that palace, and every place here mentioned has been talked of under that roof.

George I. was the son of Ernest Augustus, the first Duke of Hanover, and Sophia, the daughter of the "winter king," James I.'s unlucky son-in-law, Frederick king of Bohemia. Ernest seems to have been a convivial, feasting sort of prince, selling his subjects to Venice, who sent them to Greece to fight the Turks; and though reasonably thrifty, keeping up great state at Herrenhausen, in a sort of pinchbeck Versailles, with all the French vice, only half the French elegance, and none of the French refinement. This Ernest had seven children, three of whom died fighting against the Turks, Tartars, and Frenchmen—for they were of a jovial and fighting family. One son revolted and fled to Rome. Our George fought in his youth for the Emperor, hewing away at turbaned heads outside Vienna and on the banks of the Danube, and he also served with courage and fidelity in Italy and on the Rhine. He acquired in the camp much prudence, coolness, and decision; but he also acquired a taste for brandy-punch, and a taste for licentious pleasures, which he never overcame. His shrewd, ambitious mother, who at seventy-three had not a wrinkle in her face and read without spectacles, though she was a patron of Leibnitz and spoke five languages, had unwisely left her son to the rough tutelage of his father, who brought him up without ever having him taught English.

The Prince began life by that surest guarantee of unhappiness, an *imprudent marriage*. He was married by his managing mother to

Sophia Dorothea, a girl of sixteen, the only child of the Duke of Zell. The object of the marriage was not happiness, but the junction of the Duchy of Zell and the Electorate of Hanover. The young Prince was in love already. Sophia's mother disliked her imperious and dictatorial sister-in-law, and Sophia herself was attached to a young prince of Wolfenbüttel. Almost from the first the young Elector shunned and hated his young wife. He even insulted and degraded her by lodging in his palace his two mistresses, Mademoiselle Schulemberg, a maid-of-honour (afterwards Duchess of Kendal), and Madame Kielmansegge. Schulemberg, generally known behind the scenes at St. James's as "the Maypole," was a tall, lean, ugly woman; while, as a contrast, her companion, "the Elephant," was a mountain of exuberant fat, with large fierce black eyes rolling under dyed arched eyebrows, two acres of crimson cheeks, and an ocean of bosom uncontrolled by stays. It was one of these undesirable creatures who, when her coach was surrounded by a hooting mob as she was on her way to the palace, put her head out of the window and cried in broken English,

"Goot people, why you abuse us? We come for all your goots."

"Yes, d— you!" cried a rascal in the crowd, "and for our chattels too."

The fate of the poor wife neglected for these odious women, vicious as they were hideous, is a romance in itself—a romance enveloped in a mystery probably never now to be unravelled. Dr. Doran, one of her historians and well acquainted with German memoirs, believes implicitly in her innocence. Thackeray, a great master of human nature, believed equally firmly in her imprudence and her guilt. According to one, she was a pure, suffering woman, who merely wished to escape from the prison of her brutally cold and cruel husband. According to the other, she gave the love her husband spurned to that handsome, dissolute dandy, Philip of Königsmark, brother of the equally handsome scamp who employed his servant to shoot his rival Thynne—better known as "Tom of Ten Thousand"—as he drove past the site of the recently-burnt Opera-house at the corner of Pall Mall. Philip, who was colonel of a regiment of Hanoverian dragoons, had been in youth page at the court of Zell, and a boyish lover (it was said) of the unfortunate Princess. As to the unhappy woman, if we may be pardoned for having an opinion, we incline to her entire innocence. The handsome, chivalrous, worthless fellow was unwisely selected by her sympathising brother-in-law to help her secret flight to France. Königsmark, for his own purposes, had pretended love to the Countess Platen, a wicked old hag, the quondam favourite of the Elector. At his revels at Dresden the young envoy had ridiculed this old woman's affection, and had boasted of having won the heart of the neglected wife. The old court woman heard of this; it worked like poison in her; and she determined on revenge.

The Princess had been absent at Zell, where she had wished to stay,

but, forced back by her father, had returned with a heavy heart to her old corroding misery at Hanover. The Count Königsmark, unluckily, arrived soon after at the court to resume his duties as colonel of the guard. One night he received, to his surprise, a letter from the Princess (forged by his bitter enemy the old Countess of Platen). The letter was written in pencil, and expressed the Princess's wish to see him, near midnight, secretly, in her chamber. The Count went, but on producing the letter was informed by the Princess that it was a forgery. The lady imprudently, instead of instantly dismissing him, began to discuss with him the possibilities of escape from that detested life. The Count proposed Paris, and offered to escort her there. The Princess expressed a desire rather to seek a home at the court of her cousin, Duke Anthony Ulric of Wolfenbüttel.

While this interview was being held, the Countess von Platen was busy as Satan. She had sought the old Elector, told him who was then closeted with the Princess, and begged for Königsmark's instant arrest. The old Elector affected to be jealous, gave her the order for a guard, and added playfully his opinion that, "angry as she seemed to be with the Count, he was too handsome a man to be likely to meet with ill-treatment at her hands." The Countess heeded not this. How diabolical must have been the triumph upon the face of the old painted Jezebel as she left the Elector's room on her way to the guard-room, eager to wreak her hatred on her contemptuous lover, and to degrade for ever the poor young wife who, unconsciously, had been her rival! At the guard-room she produced the order, and requested a guard. Four men, with halberds, were instantly told off to attend her; these she plied with wine and bribed with money. The men were told that the person they were to arrest (she described his well-remembered face and dress) was a person whose safe conduct was so important to the Elector, that the Elector would rather he should be slain than that he should escape. If he ventured to resist, they were to use their swords and halberds.

In the Ritter's Saal (hall) through which the rash and deceived ambassador must pass, there stood a tall, square, massive stove that reached from the stone pavement to the dark, gloomy-timbered roof. Hidden by one of its sides, the four halberdiers waited for their gay victim. Presently they heard his footsteps. As he passed their ambush they seized him from behind. He instantly drew his sword and wounded more than one of them. It was all in vain; they closed in upon him and hewed him down with their axes. As he lay groaning and covered with blood, the tapestry lifted, and there glided in the old Jezebel, who going up to the dying man trod fiercely upon his gory face. The brave fellow, when he felt his life fast ebbing, thought of the lady and what she might suffer, groaned "Spare the innocent Princess!" and expired.

This is one account; but, according to one Zayer, an artist in

lacquer-work employed by the Princess, who professes to have been present at the time of the assassination, the Electoral Prince and the Hof Fourier, having returned suddenly from the opera, broke into the room armed and wearing masks. The Count, who was sitting on the bed of the Princess, with his back to the door at which they entered, started up and flashed out his sword.

"So thus I find you!" cried one of the masks.

The Count exclaimed, "Who can say anything unbecoming of me?"

The Princess, clasping her hands, cried, "I, a princess!—am I not allowed to converse with a gentleman?"

But the masks, without listening, slashed and stabbed at the Count, who fought gallantly, and pressed so at the Electoral Prince that he at last unmasked and begged for his life; and, while he did so, the cowardly Hof Fourier got behind Königsmark and ran his sword through him. He fell, groaning, "You are murderers before God and man, who do me wrong."

The poor wretch was then taken into a vault, confessed by a priest, beheaded, and buried in a hole at once, dug in the right-hand corner of the vault by the priest, the Hof Fourier, and the executioner.

But this account is not faultlessly true, since the Electoral Prince was certainly at Berlin at the time of the murder. According to Walpole, who had been told the ghastly story by his father, who had heard it from Queen Caroline, Königsmark was strangled, and then buried under the floor of the Princess's dressing-room. According to Thackeray the body was buried the next day, and the guards were bound to silence. Dr. Doran says the body was covered with quick-lime. This was in July. In October of the same year, the Princess, then only eight-and-twenty years of age, was sent under escort to the Castle of Ahlden, where she remained a state prisoner for thirty-two years. The unhappy woman never admitted her guilt; and made but the one pathetic reply to all her husband's offers of reconciliation, "If I am guilty, I am not worthy of him; if I am innocent, he is not worthy of me."

The Prince's offers of reconciliation seem sufficient proofs that his wife's crime had been merely imprudence. Shortly after her retirement from court, the Princess's two children—George Augustus, then ten years old, and Sophia, two years younger—were taken from the arms of their heart-broken mother. Four years after this murder, the old Elector died, and George—our George I.—donned the ermine. Sixteen years later he passed under the archway of St. James's Palace, and took possession of the English crown—no bad windfall for a little German potentate. In 1706 the old Countess Platen, still rosy with rouge and white and blooming with ceruse, died. She had long been blind, and, as the story goes, haunted at night by the ghost of Königsmark. The poor Princess was, to the hour of her death, known only as the

"Princess of Ahlden." For one happy and too short year the poor prisoner was allowed to live with her father and mother at Zell, and then was hurried back to her dreary prison-castle. She died a few months only before her cruel husband. It is said that George's son, the rebellious Prince of Wales, had threatened, if she survived his father, to bring her over to England and proclaim her Queen Dowager.

This was the bitter retribution that King George I. suffered for his conduct to his wife. It ran in the Guelph family for the father reigning to hate the heir-apparent—it was the hereditary blemish of the race; and George II. detested his own son at one time just as heartily as he himself had been hated by his father. George I. banished his son to Leicester-fields, and forbade the nobles to visit him. No Whitechapel family, hardened by a street life, could have wrangled more openly than the Prince and his father. When his grandson was christened in Arlington-street, the cold, selfish old German King, who never expanded to our more generous English feelings, insisted on the Duke of Newcastle being co-sponsor to the child—probably merely because the shambling, ridiculous Duke was personally disagreeable to the Prince, whom he had treated with ostentatious disrespect. When the little heathen, in spite of his remonstrances, had been made a Christian, the Prince's hot temper broke out, he left the maids-of-honour on one side of his wife's bed, and crossing to where the King and Duke stood gloomily, menaced the latter, and said in broken English: "You are a rascal, but I shall find you!" In Queen Anne's time the father had been a Tory, and the son a Whig, and this no doubt embittered their subsequent disputes.

George I. was all through life a cold selfish man, never deviating into warm-hearted impulses of any kind. He was sometimes philosophically generous, but that arose more from his German phlegm than from the largeness of his hard heart. He never seemed to care much for the English crown—probably would have preferred his little German court and his pipe-parliaments, the gross conversation of his frightful mistresses, his hunting in the Hartz Forest, his punch-suppers at Herrenhausen, and the pompous reviews of his Bombastes-Furioso armies. He despised the Whigs and feared the Tories; he could not speak our language, he did not understand our ways, he disliked our Puritanism and our English cleanliness. When Lord Clarendon entered the German palace, two hours after midnight, on the 5th of August 1714, Divine Right yawned, turned in the bed, expressed itself vexed, and rolled again calmly into sleep. He did not hurry, did not even set out from Herrenhausen till the 31st of August, and even then stayed a fortnight cosily in Holland. Though boasting he had "the king-killers" (the Presbyterians) on his side, he seems always to have regarded England as a mere summer residence, from which the Chevalier might at any moment drive him. When he first came to the crown he affected his old German thriftiness, and paid for his

feeling and laughter on every Saturday; but he soon learned to launch out, and in 1725 demanded of Parnham the trifling sum of 500,000*l.* to clear the debts of the civil list—debts incurred in the short space of only three years! For the friends of the Pretender he at first made generous excuses. When at a masquerade-ball a Jacobite lady came up to him and pouring out a bumper asked him to drink the Pretender's health, the King made the reply of a gentleman: "I drink," he said, "with all my heart to the health of every unfortunate prince." It was a very graceful reply, but it is the only good saying of his that stands on record.

He treated also in a kindly way the Duchess of Buckingham's request to be allowed to drive through St. James's Park. The Duchess (a natural child of James II.) was a mad, proud virago, and on being refused, she wrote to the King, roundly rating him, and calling him in the plainest terms a barefaced usurper. George merely laughed at the letter, and said, "*Oh, la folle! la folle! qu'on la laisse passer!*"

Still he could set his face like a flint against his opponents. He dismissed Bolingbroke, and turned his back on Harley; he ungenerously impeached the Tory leaders for their share in the treaty of Utrecht; he exiled Atterbury, he beheaded Laver, he levied a cruel tax of 100,000*l.* on the Catholics, he repulsed the Duke of Ormond, and he ordered or sanctioned 100,000*l.* reward being offered for the apprehension of the Pretender.

This was ungenerous for a man just tumbled into a fine estate; but when danger grew nearer he became cruel. When Mar raised the rebel standard, the Earl of Derwentwater set Northumberland in a flame, and the Pretender himself landed at Peterhead, George felt the volcano was swelling under the very floors of St. James's. He was so ruthless against the misguided noblemen, that wise men shed tears at his severity, and began to ask if the proscriptions of the days of Marius and Sylla were going to be revived. He even urged forward the death of a crazed, fanatical lad named Shepherd, who had planned his death. And yet all these victims of opinion were but the adherents of a Pretender to whom he had sometimes wished to bequeath the crown, only that his own detested son might be driven from the throne. Walpole even asserts that Queen Caroline found in the cabinet of her amiable father-in-law a disgraceful proposition of Lord Berkeley to secure the Prince and convey him secretly to America.

That insufferable toad-eater Young, when he welcomed the new King to England, said,

"And when thy foot took place on Albion's shore,
We, bending, bless'd the gods, and asked no more."

It appears that this special blessing of ours even swore at his servants when they tried, by his fat mistress's orders, to prevent his drinking too much punch at Sir Robert Walpole's. He laughed at the complaint of his rapacious German mistresses sold places; and enjoined his own

cook to steal from him. The only preparation made for death by this old sinner was the taking a third mistress—Miss Brett, a dark-eyed brunette, who was to have been made a countess, and who quarrelled with the King's imperious granddaughter Anne. This Miss Brett was the daughter of that infamous woman whom Savage claimed (it is now generally thought unjustly) as his mother.

The English, as jealous of the King's visits to Hanover as some wives are of their husbands' evenings at the club, had often to endure the cruel separation. Just before he set out for his last journey thither some sturdy Jacobites hacked the limbs of his statue in Grosvenor-square, hewed the neck half through, and hung a lampoon on its breast. On his way George ate greedily of melon at supper, and had a paralytic stroke shortly afterwards. He was borne on, half-dead, still eager to reach Hanover, and died in his palace at Osnaburg. He had promised to return, if he could, to earth, and visit his lean mistress the Duchess of Kendal; and that respected lady fully believed that the venerable monarch had kept his promise when a large raven came one day flying into the windows of her villa at Twickenham!

A bad son, a bad father, a brutal husband, a king cruel to his defeated enemies—truly this first of the Georges was not a model monarch. Almost his last act was to burn his poor wife's will, in order, as it was believed, to deprive his hated son of some important benefits. His foreign policy seems to have had but one object—that of securing Bremen and Verden to Hanover. For this he even offered to surrender Gibraltar.

The next George was scarcely better than his father. Mr. Thackeray has etched him as a little dapper strutting man, with a red face, white eyebrows, and goggle eyes,—a dull, discreditable man, who corrupted the morals of his land. His father had described him "as fiery, but a man of honour." His wife George I. termed a devil, because she had a sharp tongue, and used to ridicule the old King.

This second Hanoverian occupant of St. James's Palace faithfully reproduced all the vices of his father; he also possessed some of his few virtues. Physically he was scarcely so personable as the little hard-featured man in the snuff-coloured coat and tie-wig. He is painted for us as a little gross-minded Sultan, prancing about at a court-masquerade with Madame Walmoden, spangled with diamonds and dressed as a Turk,—“a strutting turkey-cock, a naughty little (vulgar) Mahomet, with a red, inflamed, choleric face, white bushy eyebrows, and goggle eyes,—a dull little man of low tastes,” says our great cynic, “who doubted of honour, disbelieved in patriotism, and was heedless of religion.” He too, however, like his father, was of a fighting stock, and was hereditarily brave. He did not slash away at Turkish turbans, nor carry off blackamoor pages from the tents of pashas he had slain in wild cavalry-charges on the banks of the Danube; but he could foil and fence like a gallant, reckless German officer, who had his spurs

to win, and he could use them when he had them—with his face to the enemy too. He saw fighting on a large scale; not merely park-reviews, but great battles and grand scientific sieges, conducted with all the true Vauban ceremonial. He served under Eugene and Marlborough, and moved about Flanders with great polyglot armies, that met in open plains and under the walls of fortresses, and slew each other according to book on the most gigantic scale. At Oudenarde, where Corporal Trim bore his spontoon into the thickest fire, and Uncle Toby led on his regiment to where it got well peppered, George waved his cocked-hat among the foremost. He wanted to fight a single combat with the King of Prussia; and would have done it too, only the graver and more business-like warriors forbade return to the barbarism of chivalry. At Dettingen, where his horse ran away, and all but carried him into the French lines, the King leaped off the intractable animal, put himself at the head of his grenadiers with the conical brass-plated caps, and cried out in his broken English, "Now, mein Gott, I know dat I shall not run away;" he then shook his sword at the French *fantassins* and the French cannon, and called to Corporal Trim and his comrades to go in at them with the bayonet; and to work with the bayonet they went without much pressing. The little King, who hated "bainting and boetry," was proud, indeed vain, of this battle, and, as no Homer wrote an *Iliad* for him, was accustomed to brag of it; and at levees, on the anniversary of that great battle, was wont to strut about in the old powder-stained coat, to the admiration of toad-eating Dr. Young, and of his greedy favourite Lady Yarmouth, but to the scorn and derision of the secret Jacobites. George had always the pert self-conscious courage of the game-cock about him. He even wanted to head his guards (whom Hogarth caricatured), and go straight at the poor faint-hearted Pretender when he came to Derby, and the court-ladies at St. James's began to pack up their jewels and the money they had won at pam, or received as bribes.

This King, like his father, was always slinking away to Hanover, where he could be quiet and safe, and reign a Sultan on his own dunghill. Once he went for two whole years. Between 1740 and 1755 he crossed the sea eight times. His life there was stupidly monotonous—the life of a man with only two ideas in his head. Every morning at eleven a drive in procession—king, wife, favourites, maids-of-honour, and hof-youngers—through the tedious linden avenue to Herrenhausen, the country palace; again at six the same intolerable dusty drive; twice a week a French play; other nights faro in the great gallery.

At St. James's or Hampton Court there was the same mill-horse round, only broken by the silvery laugh of Molly Lepell, or the carolling voice of saucy Mary Bellenden, who took no pains to conceal her knowledge that her admirer (the Prince) was a fool, and a mean fool. Lord Hervey, the malicious, clever, effeminate, painted man, into whose

face Pope threw his strongest vitriol, describes the tedium: lking, chaises, levees, and audiences fill the morning. At night King plays at commerce and backgammon, and the Queen at rille, where poor Lady Charlotte runs her usual nightly gauntlet; Queen pulling her hood, and the Princess Royal rapping her kles. The Duke of Grafton takes his usual opiate of lottery, sleeps as usual between the Princesses Amelia and Caroline. Lord tham strolls from one room to another (as Dryden says) 'like discontented ghost, that oft appears, but is forbid to speak;' at he King gets up, the pool finishes, and everybody has their dismiss-

Their majesties retire to Lady Charlotte and my Lord Lifford, Lord Grantham to Lady Frances and Mrs. Clark; some to supper, to bed; and thus the evening and the morning make the day."

n Twelfth-night at St. James's, the King and Queen always d the court by playing at hazard in public, for the benefit of room-porter, the manager of such royal sports. The true toady bly always contrived to let the King win; for in 1731 we find King netting 600 guineas, the Queen 360, the Princess Amelia 20, Princess Caroline 10, and the Duke of Grafton and the Earl of more several thousands. The amusement that a king practised in c in 1731 is now a punishable offence.

he same paper—quoted by Mr. Thackeray, who knew the Wal-period well, and delighted in it as a field for cynicism—mentions anniversary of the Queen's birthday as the 1st of March. It was on of these days that Hogarth drew St. James's-street. The Queen d to forty-nine on that day; and the well-affected nobility and ty all came to see her—according to the ridiculous custom—in clothes. Her majesty was magnificently dressed, says the enrap-newspaper-writer, and wore a flowered-muslin head-edging, as did her Royal Highness. The Lord Portmore displayed the richest , though he was all but outshone by an Italian count, who sparkled a twenty-four diamond buttons.

he King, as we have said, quarrelled bitterly with his son; and erable, mean, empty creature that son seems to have been, with cing-master for his best friend, and a fencing-master for his prime ter. He affected to patronise honest Gay, the poet. He died, worn t youth, and the lampooners wrote over him that bitter epitaph:

"Here lies Fred,
Who was alive and is dead;
Had it been his father,
I had much rather, &c. &c.
* * * * *
Had it been the whole generation,
Still better for the nation;
But since 'tis only Fred,
Who was alive and is dead,
There's no more to be said."

THE LAST OF THE WRECK

THE sea with imperial splendour
Broke soft on the sounding shore,
And the moon-time, pale and tender,
Saw a sight that for evermore
Had brought the strange tones of sorrow,
And a grief beyond all tears,
For the dead to whom no morrow
Could come in the infinite years.

The cries were unavailing
That rang o'er the desolate sea,
From the doomed ship, madly sailing
To the death that frowned on the lee.
No need of the lighthouse-tower,
And the lamps that flash so bright ;
They said, " We have watched an hour,
And weary for morning light."

But the merciless sea rose prouder,
And the cloud-rack gathered in gloom ;
The roar of the wind grew louder,
And the good ship went to her doom.
And the moon, when the clouds were riven,
Looked out on the wreck, and I said,
" A blessing to all be given,
When the sea yields up her dead !"

H. SAVILE CLARKE.



J. D. Cooper, sc.

NITRO-GLYCERINE AND OTHER EXPLOSIVES

EVERY now and then it happens that some casual circumstance sets the *οι πολλοι* reflecting upon points and topics of science, which, though not new to scientific men, come with all the force of novelty before the public. The functions of combustion and explosion have recently been invested with an interest which, popularly at least, they did not once possess. Vague apprehensions disturb the public as to what malefactors, using the combusive and explosive powers revealed by chemistry, can or cannot do. Great names, adopted arbitrarily and without reason, have awakened great fears. There are not wanting people who would have the public to believe that the composition of a renowned incendiary fluid known to the Byzantine Greeks has recently been discovered, and that society may be at the mercy of certain reckless men. Such being the state of public feeling, it may not be unadvisable, perchance not devoid of interest, if we take a calm survey of combusive and explosive agencies, whereby some conclusion may be arrived at concerning their powers at command. At this point the question arises, whether it be politic, or otherwise desirable, to draw attention to scientific facts that might else have remained unknown to many, who, knowing, would abuse them. This is a question which I have no difficulty in solving to the satisfaction of my own mind, believing that the safety which comes of ignorance is ever purchased at too dear a price. The concession is one that only holds out a premium for your antagonist to be more deeply versed in the conditions of power than yourself; a state of things assuredly not desirable.

To begin with first principles: combustion, in its most general sense, is rapid chemical action, attended with the evolution of light and heat. No definition is perfect, and accordingly the one given fails to comprehend some few cases which seem to appertain to the combusive category. Thus, for example, in the act of respiration, when air is breathed, when oxygen unites with carbon or the matter of charcoal, carbonic acid being formed and heat evolved, the case seems to be one of combustion, although there is no evolution of light. If, however, the expression be changed—as we seem to have the right of changing it—into the equivalent, that *no light can be proved to be evolved*, the exception will vanish. The material elements of our world are some fifty-six or fifty-seven; the number not being exactly determined. All these can take part in the function of combustion; and the usual prac-

tice is, though one founded on convention only, to divide these elements into combustibles and supporters of combustion. Thus, if a jet of ordinary illuminative gas be ignited, it burns; wherefore illuminative gas is usually spoken of as a combustible. If a lighted taper be plunged into a bottle of illuminative gas, the taper goes out, but the gas itself takes fire; hence illuminative gas is said to be a non-supporter of combustion. The distinction, however, is conventional and arbitrary, as will be apparent from the following consideration. The combustive focus is at the point of contact between the atmosphere and the gas-jet; the need of such contact is imperative; but it does not in the least matter whether a jet of illuminative gas issue into an ordinary atmosphere, or a jet of ordinary atmosphere issue into an atmosphere of illuminative gas. A parallel system of reasoning may be applied to any possible case of combustion, and with the similar result of proving that the distinction commonly drawn between combustibles and supporters of combustion is wholly conventional and arbitrary.

At a first glance it might seem that certain bodies cannot involve the combustive function at all, neither being combustibles nor supporters of combustion; and probably cases for illustration might be fixed upon which, when investigated, would prove the very reverse of what they were designed to prove. Thus, it might seem that metals can neither burn nor support combustion, whereas no assumption can be more averse from the truth. Take iron for instance: common experience teaches that in an ordinary fire-place it is the coal that burns, not the iron grate-bars; nevertheless, if the metal iron be exposed in the condition of very fine powder to the air, it takes fire spontaneously, which coal will not do, however finely powdered; and from this we learn that iron is really more combustible, under chosen conditions, than coal. Similarly in respect to the metal lead, which may also by chemical means be brought to such a degree of attenuation that it spontaneously ignites; and this result, again, demonstrates the combustive energy of lead.

It is necessary now to bear the fact in mind that combustion, in respect to the elements involved, is not destructive. Thus, if a taper be lighted, and permitted to burn out, the taper indeed exists no more; but far otherwise as to the elements which once made up the taper. These elements were carbon and hydrogen, which, combustion notwithstanding, continue to exist, weight for weight, as before combustion, only in new and invisible forms of combination. The combustive results of a burning taper are—water, which escapes in vapour, and carbonic acid. Both, to ordinary sense invisible, may be collected, weighed, and estimated, by the chemist, with extreme facility.

It is not in every case, however, that the results of combustion are gaseous or vaporous. Thus, if iron be burned, the result is a solid—oxide of iron; if lead, another solid—oxide of lead; if phosphorus, a third solid—phosphoric acid. These cases of combustion, wherein a solid

burned yields a solid product, illustrate in a very striking manner the proposition already enunciated—that nothing is lost by combustion. The respective products of iron, lead, or phosphorus consumed are each respectively heavier than the original iron, lead, and phosphorus. Out of this fact come some deductions. Had iron, lead, and phosphorus been never so plentiful, they could not have served the purpose of ordinary combustibles, seeing that the results of their combustion—their ashes, so to speak—are so much more heavy and so much more bulky than the original combustibles used. In a few years' time the surface of our planet would have been converted into one vast ash-heap. The property of ordinary economical combustibles, whereby the results of their combustion are mostly gaseous or vaporous, is that which makes them practically valuable, not the innate violence of their combusive force.

Phosphorus is a rapidly combusive substance, as is well known. It bursts into violent flame under the influence of a temperature not much higher than that of the bodies of animals, and when extremely comminuted it takes fire at temperatures much lower. Nevertheless, violent though the combustion of phosphorus be, the task of igniting a piece of paper by the flame of burning phosphorus is by no means easy. The practised experimenter may try and try again, and still be baffled. The explanation is simply as follows: phosphorus by combustion yields a solid residue—phosphoric acid, which, instead of being dissipated as gas or vapour, deposits upon the paper, and, covering it as with a glaze, protects it from the violent flame of combustion. This fact is of some practical importance when taken into consideration with the so-called Fenian or modern Greek fire. The latter material is nothing else than a solution of common phosphorus (phosphorus can exist in two states, which we may designate as common and uncommon) in a liquid known to chemists as “bisulphide of carbon.” If a portion of this liquid be thrown upon any combustible material, the bisulphide of carbon—one of the most volatile liquids in nature—soon evaporates, leaving phosphorus in an extreme state of comminution. The phosphorus then inevitably takes fire, no matter how cold the atmosphere; but it by no means follows that the combustible substance upon which it evaporates shall participate in the combustion. If, however, a little wax or paraffin be dissolved in the phosphorous solution, then the danger of communicated combustion is much enhanced. During the American war this liquid was used to a considerable extent as a charge for shells, but I am not aware with what results. It is the so-called Fenian fire, otherwise the modern Greek fire. It might as well have been called the Peruvian fire, the Brazilian fire, or any other fire, having not the slightest analogy with the original Byzantine compound. Instead of using the bisulphide of carbon as solvent, chloride of sulphur would be found a more effective liquid. Though not so volatile as the former, and consequently permitting greater lapse of time before the

phosphorus ignites, it has the advantage—considered as a power—of liberating a most poisonous and irritating vapour. It is a common notion that the Americans discovered these fire-liquids, but a notion devoid of accuracy. Chemists have been aware of the fact for very many years; but prominence was first given to it in this country during the late Russian war. Captain Disney then surprised the public by projecting a bottle or glass shell charged with a certain liquid against a surface hard enough to break it, and combustible enough to burn; a door, for example. Under the circumstances the wood-work was set on fire. The device was involved in some foolish secrecy,—foolish, seeing that chemists were well aware of what the gallant captain used. About the same time I happened to illustrate the effectiveness of the compound painfully, but conclusively. A certain gallant captain put himself into communication with me relative to the composition of the terrible liquid. I not only told him, but I gave him a vial of the liquid, under strict injunctions that he should by no means pocket the vial, but carry it in his hand. The admonition was not unnecessary, as the sequel will prove; but the gallant soldier disregarded it. Not liking to pass through London streets ostentatiously carrying a physis-bottle, he put it in the tail-pocket of his coat. The day was warm, and the captain a rapid walker. The liquid expanding blew out the cork, then escaped through the coat-pocket, with mischievous effect. A few seconds more and the captain was ablaze. I believe that any competent court of surgical inquiry would be able to attest the combustive efficacy of the liquid. The wound mended, but the sting of a joke remained which probably gave the soldier more irritation than the burning. The tale at clubs and elsewhere went that he had been mistaken for a comet—reason obvious. He chafed under the jibes.

It has been stated already that there is no analogy whatever between these phosphoric liquids and the Greek, or rather Byzantine, fire. The name has been borrowed arbitrarily, like many other names. We speak of paraffin-oil, for example—a strongly odorous liquid; whereas every chemist knows that paraffin is a *solid*, without either odour or taste. The so-called Greek fire was not known to the ancient Greeks, but was employed by the Byzantines, and occasionally by other nations, at a period anterior to the utilisation of gunpowder. It was thrown in pots, darted through tubes, and projected at the extremities of arrows and javelins. From accounts handed down, it seems that the Greek or Byzantine fire was what in modern military phraseology would be called “liquid carcass composition.” It consisted, I have very little doubt, of sulphur dissolved in native petroleum and nitre incorporated. Such a compound, unlike the modern Greek fire, will not ignite spontaneously. It had to be projected alight and yet burning, as is done with modern carcasses. Notwithstanding the showy characteristic of the modern Greek fire, namely, that of *its* spontaneous combustion, probably the Byzantine fire would bear off

the palm, considered with reference to its ultimate power of mischief. Confessedly, however, the solutions of phosphorus in either bisulphide of carbon are very dangerous ; so dangerous, that some control should be imposed on their manufacture, or, more properly speaking, the materials of their manufacture.

This is no proper occasion to go with any degree of minuteness into the history of the Byzantine fire. It was by no means confined to the Byzantines, as already affirmed. It was used by the Saracens during the Crusades ; it constituted a part of the armament of Genghis Khan, and was employed on many other occasions. The explanation of its disuse naturally flows from a consideration of the history and gradual application of gunpowder. So soon as means were discovered to utilise the latter, Greek fire was found by comparison incompetent, and was thereupon disused.

Greek fire, be it remembered, is not explosive ; neither are its modern representatives explosive. To ignite is their only power ; not to shatter and blow up. This latter function appertains to explosives, to the consideration of which at length we come. In order to gain explosive energy the following postulates must be fulfilled : first, we must have very rapid combustion ; secondly, the combustive energy must be of such sort that the results shall be gaseous, either wholly or in part. It stands to demonstration that no combustion, however rapid, the product of which does not occupy a greater space than the materials undergoing combustion, can yield an explosive energy. The cases of explosive combustion known to chemists are, so to speak, innumerable ; but the cases are very few in which the powers of explosive combustion can be utilised. Some explosive compounds evolve their gases too slowly, others too rapidly, for profitable use ; a large number are too unmanageable for practice. All these points considered, there still is found a considerable residue having valuable properties for certain uses. In estimating the relative value of explosives, it is necessary to consider what any particular explosive is expected to accomplish. One may be best adapted for blasting and shattering ; another for projecting a bullet. Considered in reference to the latter function, I know of no explosive so good as gunpowder ; neither do I ever expect to learn that any so good as powder has been discovered. The defects of this material are that its combustion generates both smoke and ashes ; in other words, gunpowder fails to satisfy the theoretical conditions of burning into gases wholly. As a *per contra*, or set-off, gunpowder is extremely manageable. It may be made of any degree of strength within the limits of its components, and this is a most important consideration. Strictly speaking, every gun should have a powder especially made for it ; and although this cannot be practically done to the uttermost, it is always aimed at, and to a very considerable degree approximated. Gunpowder being a mechanical, not a chemical, compound, admits of these variations ; whereas the composition of all

chemical explosives is fixed by nature, and wholly immutable. Proceeding with our comparison, no case was ever known of spontaneous explosion of gunpowder; which is more than I believe can be averred of any explosive *chemical* compound. Another important consideration is, that gunpowder never deteriorates by storage to any considerable degree, far less does it utterly decompose and become effete; which happens to many chemical explosives—and to gun-cotton especially, as I believe, notwithstanding all the ingenious devices of Baron Lenk, whereby the tendency of gun-cotton to spontaneous decomposition was hoped to have been obviated. Moreover, even if the chemical explosives were equally safe with gunpowder, the latter would most probably continue to take the lead as a projectile explosive. It is a fact, but one not to have been anticipated, that, whether taken weight for weight, or measure for measure, gunpowder evolves more gas on combustion than any other known explosive compound, chemical or mechanical. This is a point of prime moment in any application of an explosive body to projectile uses. Regarded as to its shattering or disruptive effects, gunpowder stands rather low in the explosive scale of comparison. Contemplated as a projectile agent, this is advantageous. The intent of projectile force is not to shatter the gun, but to urge the bullet.

These points considered, we come to the conclusion, that, whereas some explosive bodies would be better than gunpowder—did we only dare to use them—for charging a shell, to explode and devastate by shattering when launched against the object, gunpowder may still be preferable for launching the shell. So far as relates to shells projected by ordnance, the fact is conclusively proved that gunpowder is about the only safe shell-charge. All the chemical explosives are prone to explode, and some inevitably do explode, under the shock of the concussion of firing the ordnance. I believe our military authorities have come to this conclusion even in respect to gun-cotton; and if so, then the objection applies to all the rest *à fortiori*.

It is worthy of remark, however—and military engineers will see its purport—that many explosives, so prone to explode that they cannot be used as charges of shells to be shot from ordnance, may still be employed as charges for shells to be projected at the head of Congreve rockets. The contents of a rocket-shell suffer no concussion when the rocket first starts, or during the flight of the same. There would be no great difficulty in the use of fulminating silver, or mercury, or nitro-glycerine thus applied; whereas if either were to be discharged in a shell from a piece of ordnance, explosion by first impact would be inevitable. It is difficult to resist the conclusion, that in the event of another European war, this fact will be applied. The opinion is not propounded, that fulminate of silver, or even nitro-glycerine or gun-cotton, will ever constitute part of a field-artillery equipage. The danger would be too great. The question is, whether a beleaguered fortress might not use these things; whether these explosives might

not find application as coast-defences. The general feeling among chemists is that the science of war-engineering lags somewhat behind in the application of destructive resources. The writer, for his own individual part, would engage to breach the Plymouth Breakwater by a submarine projectile; or sink, by similar means, the strongest iron-clad the Government have afloat, or ever will have. The British Government had the benefit of the suggestion, on or about the 20th of November 1861, and in the following way: At that time, being so ill that recovery seemed hopeless, I communicated to a friend well known in artillery circles, a scheme for blowing up iron ships by submarine projectiles. The plan was deemed so feasible that the friend urged me to communicate with the War Office forthwith. I was too ill; besides, my faith in the British war-executive was small even then; it is smaller now, that the memory of poor Snider's broken heart is present. I told my friend to communicate the scheme to the War departments if he liked, not mentioning my name, but with the reservation that, should I ever recover, the right should be mine of stating my claim to the invention whenever I might see fit. The scheme was as follows: Bearing the two facts in mind, that a Congreve rocket passes through water as well as through air, and that to the dimensions of a rocket there is no limit, my proposition was, to suspend a rocket at any given depth by floatation, point it in the direction of the object to be demolished, and fire. Under those circumstances, the only deviation possible would be that in a horizontal plane. The projectile would, in point of fact, be endowed with great accuracy of flight, or rather of progression. Not being restrained by any official reticence, I may state that on the scheme being communicated to Sir William Wiseman, he is reported to have objected, on the ground of the unfairness of inevitable destruction. But what, it may be asked, is the object and purport of war? There would be no difficulty in manufacturing a submarine rocket that should carry in its head a ton, if desired, of nitro-glycerine. We need not inquire what would be the effect of a ton of this material exploded under the bottom of an iron-clad; what would be the effect of one hundred pounds, or even twenty?

As to the chemical nature and relations of explosive compounds, it is a remarkable fact that almost all contain the element nitrogen, or azote. This nitrogen is a veritable mystery to chemists—an element to impress them with wonder, used as they are to wonders. Contemplate it thus. Here the atmosphere we breathe is made up of two gases commingled—oxygen and nitrogen. Of these, nitrogen contributes four-fifths by measure; and, so far as by the evidence of the atmosphere we can learn, it is wholly void of active properties. If instead of the atmosphere we contemplate nitrogen, pure and unmixed, the mysterious negation of this element comes out with equal prominence. It does not burn, does not support combustion, has neither smell nor taste, and is invisible. Chemists are wont to indi-

vidualise this element by stating, not what it does, but what it does not do. The veritable corpse of creation one might call this nitrogen, as oxygen may be considered the very life-spirit. Yet trace this same nitrogen to its combinations, and then see how the corpse can waken to life and energy tremendous. Contradictory and antagonistic is this nitrogen withal; generating things seemingly diverse as are the Antipodes. Combined with hydrogen, it generates the powerful alkali ammonia; with oxygen, several powerful acids, one of them aquafortis. By union with chlorine, it yields the terrible chloride of nitrogen, which, discovered by Ampère fortuitously, blew out an eye and carried off two fingers, just by way of memento. Probably chloride of nitrogen is the most dangerously explosive body known, one to which nitro-glycerine is insignificant by comparison. It is amusingly capricious, this chloride of nitrogen. Touched with a red-hot poker it mostly does not explode at all, but evaporates hissing; whereas the slightest contact with oil or fat—or, to be brief, most of the things one usually comprehends under the general designation “dirt,”—it detonates with shattering violence. Strangely enough, contact with oil of vitriol will not only not explode it, but protects it from casual explosion. This fact remembered, the safest way of making the chloride is to use leaden vessels previously rinsed with oil of vitriol. A single drop exploded on a thick old-fashioned penny-piece beats the copper into a miniature slop-basin. Terrible in nature though this compound be, it is practically harmless. I have never yet seen the man who would dare to make it in quantities larger than a few drops, and these, if left to themselves, soon vanish. They fleet into thin air; irritating to the lungs indeed, but void of explosive quality.

With iodine, nitrogen generates a compound equally explosive as the last, but hardly to be called dangerous. Iodide of nitrogen may be made most easily by steeping a little iodine in hartshorn for a few minutes. Chemical combination ensues, whereby the iodide of nitrogen subsides in the form of a dark-brown powder. It may be collected and handled with impunity when moist; but when once dry, it explodes on the slightest contact, even by the shock of letting it fall on a surface of water. In quantities less than a small salt-spoonful this compound is hardly to be considered dangerous. It may be employed in some amusing devices. Spiders may be cut out of cork, and hollowed underneath; the hollows may be stuffed with the iodide of nitrogen, whilst moist and inexplusive; any black brush will yield bristle substitute for very passable legs. Presentable spiders may be made in this way—and nobody shows mercy to spiders. Placed on a floor, some unfriendly foot is sure to descend upon the arachnid; stuck against a wall, some housemaid's broom comes to the charge. Then follow a bang, a scream, a hop; and the surrounding air grows thick with weird purple vapour.

It has already been said that the explosive bodies known to che-

mists are, so to speak, legion ; and, being so, it would be folly to attempt to exhaust them in one short article. Come we, then, to gun-cotton and nitro-glycerine, two explosive agents of great modern celebrity. Perhaps it will suffice here to indicate that both gun-cotton and nitro-glycerine hold nitrogen locked up and ever striving to get free ; hence their respective tendency to explosion. Chemically speaking, nitro-glycerine may be said to be liquid gun-cotton ; it is, in fact, little else. Here again we find what seems to be a strange contradiction. Some of us are old enough to remember the burning of a tallow-candle—dull, sputtering, guttering, and the everlasting snuffers ! Why did the tallow-candle burn so dull ? Because of the glycerine the tallow contained. Glycerine is incombustible ; wherefore, extract the glycerine and we have the brilliant-burning composite. Incombustible alone, but join that glycerine to the inert nitrogen—that corpse of creation, as we called it—and what then ? Nitro-glycerine results, of which is not the death-dealing natural history written in recent despatches from Newcastle ?

Nitro-glycerine was discovered by Sobrero just twenty years ago, and was first made by Nobel on the large scale. I believe it to be less dangerous than gunpowder as to manufacture ; not, perhaps, more dangerous in use ; and its value for blasting is incontestable. To interdict its use would seem to be unreasonable. Far better educate those who need it to use it with safety. The power of nitro-glycerine as a blasting agent is so indisputable, the agent has acquired so high a character amongst miners, that a probable result of interdicting its use would be to promote its manufacture clandestinely.

Under these circumstances, the danger to be apprehended would be much enhanced. Each small secret manufacture would constitute a separate focus of danger. Far better promote large factories, and bring the conditions of transport and storage within the sphere of reasonable safety.

Was nitro-glycerine the agent of the late Clerkenwell explosion ? Assuredly not. The smoke settles the question. Gunpowder is quite competent to do all that was done to that prison ; and a very dull look-out somebody or somebodies must have kept to permit all to happen that did happen. Barrels will hardly be allowed to come so close unchallenged to prison-walls again ; but many more ingenious schemes are possible. Were the writer bent on explosive mischief—which he is not—were he appealed to for a new explosive device, he might suggest the following. To tell it is, of course, to protest against it, and avert the evil. A full-sized adult coffin would hold some sixteen six-pounder Congreve rockets, sticks a trifle relaxed, a matter of small moment for short ranges. Each six-pounder rocket-head might hold a pound at least of nitro-glycerine : nothing so easy. The coffin head-piece might be made of paper for appearance, so as to avoid any far or impediment. A string attached to a friction-tube might hang down

handy. The procession goes forth, we will assume, slow and solemn. All make way, even the police. At a convenient distance from some prison-wall to be demolished—say eighty or one hundred yards—the friction-tube is exploded, the rockets take flight in a bouquet, and inevitably strike the wall. Besides the first impact of sixteen six-pounder rockets, there would be the secondary explosive force of sixteen pounds of nitro-glycerine. The wall would inevitably go down, and things beside. Policemen and special constables would do well to keep a sharp eye on funeral processions. If a coffin might thus become an instrument of destruction, in how much greater degree a hearse?

There is a point in reference to the possible utilisation of combustible and explosive agents that has hardly met with the attention it deserves. In coming to a conclusion as to the possible use of certain very dangerous agents, the possibilities of regular war have commonly been assumed. The individuals of regular armies are not wholly reckless of their lives, though their mission be death. It is otherwise with sworn conspirators. A wholly reckless man may dare the terrors of many a compound from which a soldier, without any disparagement to his courage, would shrink. For example, there is a liquid known to chemists under the name of kakodyl. It is a sort of alcohol, holding arsenic as the vivifying principle; and its terrible nature may be inferred from the statement of what it will do. Kakodyl, when scattered about, as from a broken bottle or a shell, immediately takes fire, and whilst burning liberates arsenical fumes, to breathe a mouthful of which is death. It has been taken for granted that kakodyl is too dangerous for the usages of war. That is not the question now. Kakodyl could be made in a garret, and may be easily discharged at the head of a rocket.

J. SCOFFERN, M.B.

DIANA GAY

A Novel

BY THE AUTHOR OF "BELLA DONNA," "NEVER FORGOTTEN," ETC. ETC.

Book the First.

CHAPTER XIV. THE SERVANTS' BALL.

MARGARET BOWMAN, impeded again all that morning in her usual way, saw an opening after lunch-time, when she could swoop down and absorb Diana all but entirely. This lady was an enormous eater and drinker—as was, indeed, rendered necessary by her habit of body; after such meals her face used to glow and her eyes fill somewhat mysteriously. She carried out a little apology, to the effect that the household orders forced her to indulge in large draughts of port wine, and Mr. Chewton, very soon discovering how matters were, would come in privately, and softly fill up her tumbler—under protest and surmise.

She had a mysterious communication for Diana.

"Come over to me, dear; I have something to tell you. You're always over into Calthorpe, aren't you, dear?"

"I didn't hear," said Diana faintly, thinking of the riding party, "but I shall be delighted."

"It's no matter; I was told that was all arranged. I can sit at home and do my work. But what I wanted to tell you was,—Canning, the politician—our *chargé d'affaires et ministre plénipotentiaire*—"

"Dear me, how I remember poor Vuillaume, the French minister, when I and Charles were at Dresden—such attention as he paid us—he came into the ball himself. Well, but Canning—who's a *regular* *di Borgo*—comes to me just now, and says, 'Let me talk Europe to you in the back seat.' I couldn't help laughing—'Europe in the back seat!'—very clever that is. He says you're *the only one in the room* that understands him."

Diana looked a little alarmed instead of pleased at this compliment, for Mr. Canning had not much communication with her. But she eventually gave up the ride, and Mr. Canning Bowman was dragged into his letter-case and forced into the back seat,—a sudden reluctance which mystified Diana a great deal, she having heard so much of his desire to go with them. However, with Diana driving, and he sitting behind, he tried to make the day as agreeable as he could, "talked of the weather," or rather "Baron Brenner," with great fluency; Lady Marston all the while taking half-mournful side-looks at Diana, with a shake of her head, in astonishment and wonder. This was all her

contribution to the conversation, save now and again, a "Canning, tell us about the Baron saying you were a *Tallyrandiste* of the first water."

And Mr. Canning, with an "O, nothing," started off and told "the anecdote," which was really comprised in that word,—the Baron having merely said he was *Tallyrandiste*.

When they came home from the drive, Diana found his lordship in the study, busy with his *Times*. Her plan suddenly darted into her head. She sat down beside him, and began a little speech.

"Now, Lord Bellman, I want you *so* much to do something for me,—a little favour; if you *can*, that is."

His lordship looked down on her good-humouredly.

"My dear Miss Diana, command me; that is, provided it is not to get a place for any one."

"No, no," said Diana eagerly; "it's quite another thing. You know to-morrow is my birthday, and papa and I have determined that no one is to give me a present, or anything of that sort. But I will take one, Lord Bellman, from *you*."

He was a man of the world, and kept a lot of smiles by him of interest, enjoyment, &c., which he could fit on as occasion served; but this introduction alarmed him a little.

"Now, I'll tell you," said Diana, getting closer to him, in a most coaxing way; "there's poor Richard Lugard,—a most honest, fine fellow, whom we all like here,—and he has set his heart, I think, on getting a seat in the House."

"O, I see! And he has sent you to canvass. 'Pon my word—"

Diana coloured. "No, I don't mean that," she said. "But one would be as good as another, just for a little time."

"But," said the peer, "what's to become of our friend Bligh—who saved you, too?—isn't this rather hard on him?"

"O, as for *that*," said she confidently, "I can explain all that. You see he is so sensible, and steady, and clever, he can get on any way; whereas poor Dick requires this. Robert Bligh can wait; but Richard may never get such a chance."

In short, the young lady pressed the matter so ardently that she at last prevailed, not knowing that Mr. Lugard the father had had a long talk with his lordship in the morning, during which he had mentioned a few considerations that rather shook his lordship's purpose: that young Bligh had a long head and a deep one, but was too wise to be pliant; that he was full of those advanced Radical opinions and crotchets—ballot, household suffrage, &c., and was just the man that might turn round on his patron and say, "I am a trustee for the people; I was wrong in accepting on such conditions; but now that I am here, I feel that I have a superior duty to remain here." "Not," said Mr. Lugard, "but that he is a most honourable fellow; but these crotchets make slaves of their holders." His lordship was a good deal

alarmed at this view; said he'd given no positive assurance, and would hold the matter over.

That day there was to be another "state dinner," and various neighbours had been invited, chiefly hunting men. The stout, short Mr. Pratt, whose *chronique* was to excite such a *fureur* in the *Mercury* a few days hence, was invited, and found himself treated with distinction and respect, especially by his lordship.

Hunting is the true democracy, and, like the death it sometimes leads to, levels all distinctions. Perhaps it has an aristocracy of its own, even though it be a kind of "shoddy" sort. This gentleman was consulted obsequiously, and his replies hung upon with admiration.

Diana was in infinite spirits. She had gone up hastily to Lugard and whispered him before dinner, and that whisper made him start and colour, and say, "No; how good of you!"

"I am an angel, am I not?" said she, and tripped away to take Lord Bellman's arm. "O, do you know, pa," she called out during dinner, "that illness of poor Hodges is not a secret? They were all in a fuss at Calthorpe, and told us in the shops that he had resigned already. And do you know, papa," she went on, with that charming serio-comic manner of hers, "do you know we saw in my friend the radical baker's window an address to the Radical electors, my friends, not to engage themselves?"

Lord Bellman looked a little grave. Mr. Gay would have looked grave too, but he was busy helping, and thinking of something else.

"Ah! there's my popsy for you! She keeps her eyes open."

About nine o'clock was to be the servants' ball in the large oak hall. This festival brings an exquisite pleasure to the ladies of that condition, and all the young maids were met during the day flitting through the house, looking for dresses. The "word had been passed" to friends at neighbouring houses, and the housekeeper, Mrs. Simms, had formally invited various "gentlemen" who were acquaintances; and by particular desire a special invitation had been sent to a London footman and a town valet of distinction, who were known to be on a short visit at a house close by. These gentlemen, finding themselves rather *ennuyés* with the simple pastoral pleasures of the country, had promised to look in. So might Major Marjoram and Captain de Lacy, of the Blues or Coldstreams, negligently promise the almost suppliant Mrs. Price, giving her little suburban party, and eager for the presence of these warriors to "carry it off."

It was "Stanley," Lady Margaret's own "body-maid," who had met these gentlemen, they having visited at Bowman in their professional capacity, and being sent into the housekeeper's room for refreshment, had delighted that select circle with their easy London manners and lively "hanneckdoats." Stanley, a fresh, good-looking tirewoman, was supposed to have made an impression on the somewhat blast heart of

Mr. Baker, who had said in a loud whisper to his friend that she was "dee-sidedly well-fevered."

No wonder it was looked forward to with interest, this little festival, giving the world of below-stairs an opportunity for playing at ladies and gentlemen, and to thus grow a little more refined.

Diana took the greatest delight in this coming entertainment. With her own maid Fanny, a pretty village-girl little older than herself, she had been busy for such time as she could spare from the great people. She had tumbled out all her dresses, dug and dived and delved in trunks to fetch up something that would set off Fanny to the best.

"Here, Fanny, you must have this, and this too. And here, take these earrings—I don't want them. And mind you come to me when you are dressed. And there—there's a wreath too; I've only worn it once."

"O, miss—the beautiful French flowers that came from Paris! I couldn't—"

"O, nonsense!" said Diana. "I'll make papa get me a whole box next week. Mind you come to me, and I'll put them in."

And so Fanny did, and, in a pale-blue silk of her mistress's and a muslin body, she was the belle of the feast.

At nine o'clock the distinguished party of immortals descended from above. They found the company already clustered at the door, and a little shy before their betters.

The floor was cleared. The two fiddlers and the "bass"—a village orchestra—were "in high fettle," and tuning and tuning, as at that famous Fezzwig dance, "like fifty stomach-aches." They were rather squeezed in a corner, but could discourse spirited if not very correct music.

Then the young ladies—"in service" I mean—who had been clustering together timidly at the door, debouched quite a cloud of muslins and silks and flowers, all with their gloves too, save Mrs. Simms the housekeeper, an old conservative as to such vanities, and only lending herself to such frivolities.

Then Mr. Gay, without the *condescension* too often applied on these occasions as a sort of salvo, advanced to Mrs. Simms and begged her hand for the first dance. That lady curtsied with a native dignity, and accepted.

Then Diana went across to Mr. Chewton, who had been expecting the honour, and with a pleasant laugh invited him to dance with her. That gentleman indeed showed his training and knowledge of the world by his calm and almost elegant manner.

Diana, thus secured, went over to the gentlemen and whispered to them with a business air:

"Now go and be gracious, and ask those poor girls; and *don't be condescending.*"

Mr. Richard Lugard was in great spirits that night.

"Give me your orders ; I'll do whatever you wish. Come, Bligh, sir—none of your aristocratic prejudices!"

And Mr. Richard, by way of noble abnegation and self-sacrifice, flew over and offered his hand for the first country-dance to my Lady Margaret's pretty maid, one of the belles of the room.

Bligh, always a little shy and thoughtful even in such trifles, felt awkward in going up to a cluster of servants whom he did not know. But Miss Diana, already taking her place in the dance, fluttered over to him.

"O, *won't* you do what I ask?" she said timorously. "I daresay this all seems very trifling to you, and I know we ought not to ask you. But," she added, with a little mystery, "*they all expect it*, just for to-night and Christmas ; and I only ask the dance."

Bligh was looking at her with the air of being a little hurt at these rather gratuitous suppositions.

"I have no wish," he said gently, "to shirk my duty, or any duty you put on me. But I did not happen to know any of these young ladies."

He saw Diana's little maid, and went over to ask her. But another gentleman was beforehand with him ; Mr. Baker, with curt and blunt promptness, which he had seen a good deal of in London drawing-rooms, "cut in" before him, and cut out the prize before his eyes.

"Beg pardon," he said, "but hengaged to me."

My Lord Bellman's "hown gent" saw Mr. Baker wink at him ; by which he knew that this was only a clever invention ; but Bligh felt the awkwardness of debating with a valet about his claim to a lady's-maid, and withdrew. There was infinite tittering at Mr. Baker's cleverness. Then the music struck up, and all plunged forward with vigour and agility, and Mr. Gay's partner, Mrs. Simms, got into motion with a grave activity that was almost amusing. Diana, *vis-à-vis*, was laughing—laughing to everyone all round as she "set" to Mr. Chewton's portly person.

"Now then, no shrinking—real steps—work away!" said Mr. Gay cheerily, as he pranced by, warming to the business.

Bligh was looking on a little ruefully, and yet amused and interested.

"She might, I think, be a *little* more kind—after what has passed."

His mother saw him "moping" in this way, and came over to him.

"I hope, dear, you are going to enjoy yourself like the rest. And engage her in time before all the others. Come—you know, all these are little points in the game."

"My dear mother," said he smiling, "you are so sanguine. What is the game?"

"My dear boy, when will you believe altogether in your *mamma*,

without her having to explain everything? Why, even in your standing here, dancing with no one, there is an inferiority. It looks as if you had tried and *couldn't*. See! Look round. Every one of *your* standing has succeeded in that. I know it is not worth anything; but still it is a point lost."

Bligh reflected a moment, then said, "You are always wise, mother, and think of everything." He went up to Diana. "There will be dancing, I suppose, later for *us*? And, if so, would *you*—?"

"I shall be delighted," said she with a smile. "Do you know you are beginning to surprise me?—a grave barrister like you coming out in this way! I shall be delighted—that is, *after* my dances with Mr. Lugard."

"What, engaged already!"

"Yes," said Diana nodding, "since dinner. The early bird, you know.—Thank you, Mr. Chewton, we had a very charming dance.—By the way, Mr. Robert, I want to speak to you privately and confidentially. Suppose we take a walk round the room."

Mr. Bligh was delighted. His mother's fond eyes followed them with approbation as they walked. Miss Diana was setting out that most captivating of all the little "properties;" that *moue-moue*, confidential, mysterious, and persuasive look.

"Now," said she, "Mr. Robert, I want you to do me a favour—a *little* favour. You know my birthday is coming on."

"To be sure," said Bligh; "anything you like."

"But you must promise me."

"Well, I do," he said smiling.

"Well, you must know there is a great scheme on foot about this Calthorpe election, and I was speaking to Lord Bellman this very evening—canvassing him, as I may call it; but he told me that *you* were thinking of it."

Bligh looked at her mystified. "Well," he said, "and what does this mean?"

"Well," she said, almost turning round to look into his face: "what we want is this; there is poor Richard Lugard here, as we all know—a little unsteady, you know, and wants application."

Bligh was looking uneasy and doubtful.

"Now, *you*," she went on eagerly, "are *sure* to succeed. O! you are *so* clever."

"But," said Bligh quietly, "what is it you wish me to do?"

"Well," she said, hesitating, "to let him get in, if possible, for Calthorpe. You are so wise, and full of sense and knowledge and learning,—you are sure at any time; whereas this is the only chance *he* may have. If you said a word to Lord Bellman—"

"I declare," said Bligh impatiently, "this is rather too much. I am getting tired, Miss Gay, of being always told I am wise, and sensible, and all that. It seems to me to be rather a drawback than anything

lse. And let me say, too, it is a little unkind to make such a request of me."

"Unkind!" said she, starting; "O no, I didn't mean it so."

"I am sure not," he said more gently; "but you don't know what you ask, or the difficulties of the thing. It seems to me that I am to be called on to give way to Lugard in everything; and why *you* should ask me above all others—unless you are so particularly interested—"

Diana drew herself up; a tinge of colour came into her delicate cheek.

"I suppose you mean after yesterday, Mr. Robert Bligh? *You needn't remind me of it.* I am quite sensible of the obligation, and always shall be, I hope. You will not find me ungrateful, I assure you. But I meant no harm in asking you what I have."

His blue eyes turned on her with gentle surprise and grief.

"Was I dreaming of such a thing? No, indeed, I assure you. No one thinks less of that poor service than I do. But, with all respect to your wishes, I am not called on to give way in this manner to Richard Lugard *all* my life long. We happened to be at school together; we are neighbours here; but that is all. We are not on such terms of romantic friendship. Besides, there are real difficulties in the matter, that you can have no idea of. The thing has gone further than you think; I am half-pledged as it is."

"But I tell you," said Miss Diana coquettishly, "I have made it all right with Lord Bellman."

"There are things besides Lord Bellman," said he; "but I am not at liberty to say more now."

"O, then, you really refuse me the only little favour I ask you! Very well; it is no matter—none in the world, Mr. Bligh."

"You don't know the difficulty," said Bligh gently; "*something* has occurred in Calthorpe which has made it almost impossible. Then there is my mother, whom I must consult, and who has her wishes; just as you would do what would please Mr. Gay, your father. And as I say—as for Lugard, there is no reason why I should make any sacrifice for *him*, as—"

"O, hush!" said the young lady in a frightened voice.

A curling lip and flashing eyes were looking down on him.

"No sacrifice for me, Mr. Robert Bligh!" he said; "who wants it from you? Pray do not think of it. I don't require it from you or any man. What were you talking about, pray, where I was concerned? Would it be impertinent to inquire? Ah! there is the music. Come, Miss Diana—our dance. You'll tell me all about it. Pardon my word, Mr. Robert is getting quite lofty in his speech since he rowed out in a boat and rescued a lady."

"Now you mustn't talk that way," said Diana half-smiling, but greatly relieved, as she saw that Lugard was not going to make a noise in a quarrel about the matter.

"Ah! no, I won't complain, then," said he. "But I warn you, you'll be reminded now and then of D'Orsay and that splendid rescue."

Diana could not help smiling, but became grave again in a second, and shook her head, and looked over a little guiltily at Bligh, who all but knew what they were saying of him. This sort of polite faithlessness is based on a sudden confidence and good-humour between two persons; and a hundred times in this little state of *effusion* we cannot resist fraying, as it were, just the edges of our dear friend's character. Then the two went away merrily into the heart of the dance. Diana was in great spirits, but she was not *quite* pleased with Mr. Robert Bligh—why, she could not say; yet she found herself repeating Lugard's remark, "that he had merely rowed out in a boat," and that she would be reminded of it often enough.

But we should now have noticed the two London gentlemen, who were indeed making an effect—Mr. Baker and friend. In dress they were scarcely distinguishable from the persons they served, having small bouquets and white kid gloves. It was seen before the night was over that of Mr. Baker Miss Stanley had made a conquest. He, as it were, appropriated her; and a neighbouring footman, hitherto an admirer, and whose attentions had been accepted, found himself dismissed with the polite unpoliteness too often exercised in analogous cases in a scale above. The neighbouring footman glared, and breathed harder as these successive slights were put on his head with an almost sweet unconsciousness. He felt his own awkwardness, uncouth bearing, difficulty of disposing of his hands, &c. Nay, he almost fancied he heard his preferred rival allude to him as "Bumpkin." Alas! Mr. Baker could *valse*! Miss Stanley was the only one of the young ladies trained in the accomplishment; and when the persons of quality present were at last flying round, Mr. Baker and partner joined in the dance, and were quite as "heasy and floatin'" (words used by Mr. Baker's friend) as any of the others. The neighbouring footman—very raw in the face, and feeling his hands a dreadful incumbrance—had to look on. He had besides to hear the pleasant "rallyings" from Miss Stanley's female friends.

Mr. Gay was watching the scene with intense enjoyment.

"Look at my popsy, how she spins it with the future member! I am sorry Chimeleigh can't come down. It would do him good to join in this. I think he coddles himself too much." He was talking to the hunting man. "Well, I won't give up D'Orsay yet. I chose him out of a hundred. He's the stuff in him all the while. The groom tells me he's been off his corn lately; but if we had him in good fettle—I tell you what; I'll ride him over to this drag-hunt on Friday and restore his character for you. I'd back him against the whole of them. You know my little woman there can't be expected to have a wrist of iron, and the fox knows it well; with me it's another matter.—I say, Bligh, my man, what's up against the grain to-night?

Why don't you stir those legal stumps of yours? Shake 'em out, man. Put Blackstone and the sheepskins out of your head for a while. Go and ask my girl to dance. Why, you ought to win everything you pleased to-night; as my poor little woman mightn't be footing it there but for you."

"Don't say that, please," said Bligh fretfully; "everybody gives it that turn. It's no such obligation at all, and I don't want it to be considered so. So pray forget it, and make Miss Diana forget it too."

Mr. Gay said afterwards, "Curious fellow, that Bob Bligh. I don't know what he is at." Then he thought of the old school-quarrel, and burst into a hearty laugh. "That's going on still," he said. "She—my popsy's—putting them by the ears still. Lord Bellman, I'll tell you as good a thing as you ever heard. There's no love lost, I suspect, between these two lads, I can tell you." And then he enlarged on that old story with which the reader is now pretty familiar.

"He is a little too magisterial for me," said his lordship, repeating a criticism that seemed destined to be always pronounced on poor Bligh. "Too wise; too much of a monopoly of that sort of thing. I like the other man; he is so open and dashing. He'd make a good M.P., I can tell you, and I daresay rattle off a good speech. Do you know, I begin to be afraid Mr. Bligh would stand too much on—er—principle. I mean, what he considers to be principle."

"O, he's a fine honest fellow, and all that," said Mr. Gay; "but I suspect he hasn't shown us his politics yet. There's no knowing about *that*. O, he'll do, never fear. Our friend will come on his legs whenever he likes."

Thus the crowd, if it is obliged to put up with constantly hearing some Aristides called Just, takes care to indemnify itself by pleasant and secret carping at the mortal whom they are thus compelled to accept.

Meanwhile the festival was going forward. It was past one o'clock; but these were good rustic dancers, who danced but seldom and meant business. They were only beginning, as it were, and showed marks of violence. The young girls panted through their exercise without restraint or disguise, and showed flushed crimson cheeks. Our genteeler ladies might have been well shocked at such an exhibition. But the progress the gentlemen made from town—and notably Mr. Baker—was all but appalling, to certain hearts at least. The native coachman and more native footman were by this time shouldered away out of the field, and were glowering afar off. The latter had found his hands utterly odious and a burden. He saw it was fast drawing on to the "yard behind the stable" and a meeting with Mr. Baker, and the coachman to see fair. The first gentleman was indeed utterly rampant. He had the control of the whole, suppressing the country-dances as "wulgar," tolerating only "wallsirs" and "curdrills," in which he and his conquest, with the higher circles, alone took part. What

DIANA GAY

could the men do? The ladies were all charmed with the new gentlemen. Now comes Robert Bligh to Diana, enjoying herself immensely and quite excited:

"Now," he said, "I suppose this is to be our dance, at last?"

The young lady put on an air of comic doubt and surprise.

"Really now, are you sure? or was it not the next after this? Don't you think it is too crowded? and I am so tired."

So do young girls love to plague gentlemen of an easy temper; with your dashing gallants they dare not play such tricks.

Bligh quite understood, and smiled.

"I am not going to let you off," he said; "I have waited for my turn long enough."

Up comes Lugard express.

"Our dance," he says, "Miss Diana. I have got these rustics to play a good valse. Heaven knows what they will make of it."

A smile of mischief came into Diana's face, almost breaking through an expression of concern.

"Dear, dear me!" she said, "there must be a mistake here. Mr. Bligh tells me I am engaged to him."

"Surely," said Bligh warmly, "you can't *really* affect to say that there was a mistake? I came to remind you a dozen times. Nothing could be clearer."

"Nothing could be clearer," said Lugard coolly. "There was the valse first, the quadrille, and the valse again. It was all settled distinctly. But, my good Bligh, you're not before the Chancellor or Master of the Rolls asking for an injunction. Don't glare at me, my dear friend."

Miss Diana giggled—she could not help it. Bligh *was* glaring. She would laugh anywhere—in church, if a surplice was awry. Bligh was a little wounded. It seemed that since he had done her that service she had all but turned against him.

She did not answer Bligh, but with an attempt at a light manner, said:

"O, nonsense! they're going to begin."

"No; you must give me my turn. No? well, I'll never ask you again."

Lugard looked at her and pursed up his mouth, as being overwhelmed.

"What will become of you?" he said. "How will you get over that? This is getting serious. Hallo, there goes the music! Come along, Miss Di, and drown care."

The spirit of mischief was in Diana. She gave a helpless look at Bligh, turned irresolute to Lugard, who swept her off in a moment.

Bligh turned away.

"Well, that settles all," he said, "and I am glad of it. I have no business in this *galère*—as, indeed, I might have known."

When the dance was over, Lugard came up to him triumphant, and took him by the shoulders behind.

"Won't do," he said, "Master Robert. Red against black any day. All your Coke-Littletons ar'n't worth anything at a ball—except to put in a stove. I wish you saw your wicked look at that poor little girl."

"I am getting quite tired of this, Lugard," said Bligh, trying to be very calm. "And I don't think you behaved quite kindly or straightforwardly."

"Pray, how then?" said Lugard gravely; "explain yourself. You are surely not going to make a business about a valse, because a young girl chose to throw you over in a dance? that seems rather childish."

"You understand me perfectly. I don't mean that. But I think, considering how long we have known each other—However, it's no matter."

"My dear friend, I was at school with you—but so I was with a hundred more fellows. Come, now, no romance of this sort."

"With all my heart," said Bligh, "and certainly, considering our last day there, there is no reason for romance."

Lugard's brow darkened at this allusion.

"You had the best of it there by an accident. I was off my guard, and you stole a march on me. School and college victories are no test, all the world knows that. Hug yourself in the thought and welcome, my good Bligh. I am for victories in real life. I want to win in love and elections. Ha! ha! You understand. And I think I am doing very well so far. Eh! come, do your best, you won't score against me, I warn you."

Bligh was now thoroughly roused. "Because I have not tried as yet. Suppose I begin now?"

And he walked away. The other, a little taken back at the change in his manner, looked distrustfully after him.

But now it was growing late. Lord Bellman was in bed again. The "quality" were dropping away gradually. Mr. Baker alone was unfatigued. He was sitting in a corner, nursing his knee, with the lady he had so fascinated. A little more, and the native footman's large hands would be at his throat. Every one was talking of the conquest.

When all were going to bed, Bligh stole quietly away. He thought of his mother with uneasiness. She was still up and watchful. He said his good-night a little hastily. "She will not be pleased with the night's work," he thought. "What could I do?"

She whispered him, "Good child,—good son,—nothing could be better!"

He looked up wondering. "Worse, mother," he said; "it's all a delusion; and we'd better dismiss it, and waste no more time."

"You foolish boy, you know nothing. I have been looking; you

have made progress to-night. I know girls and their ways, and I am more than satisfied. I will tell you something else to do to-morrow. Dream up a little of your politics to-night."

And Bligh went away pleased, but wondering still more.

It did seem that Mrs. Bligh was in some way right, for Miss Diana came fluttering down. "Where is he? Where is Mr. Robert? Gone away, and I going to dance this last dance with him! O, Mrs. Bligh, I am afraid he is angry with me!"

"Angry with you?" said Lugard, "what folly! Come along, finish with me."

"No, indeed!" said she pettishly. "This was all your doing, and I'll punish you; but I'm too tired; I'll talk to Mrs. Bligh instead."

CHAPTER XV.

A NEW CHANCE.

THE breakfast-table the next morning was all in clatter with talking over the arrangements for the drag-hunt. Here was a new excitement—who would ride, what was the course, who were to be the riders? It had been got up by Pratt, and by that "true British sportsman" Mr. Featherstone, the M. F. H. It was new to that part of the country, but some had seen it practised very successfully in Ireland, over the Kildare country, or with "The Blazers." All tongues were once more loosed, and his lordship, greatly pleased with his previous day's exertions, looked forward to it with great pleasure.

Then the mail came, and his lordship again became absorbed in despatches—now contracting his brow, now smiling complacently, now elevating his eyebrows, as who should say, "Now what *are* you at?"

"Ah!" he said, "Pollock, my man of business, will be down here to-day, about the Freeman estate. Curious how news travels; he says, 'I suppose you have heard that there will shortly be a vacancy by death or resignation in this borough. This will add something to the value of the property, as the Freeman interest used to be all-powerful.' It is to be the Bellman interest now. This all concerns Mr. Richard Lugard. Give me one of your good cigars after breakfast, and come and have a talk with me on the lawn."

When the dance of the night before had been talked over, and Mr. Baker's conquest and the native footman's grief and rage described,—how there had nearly been a personal altercation between the two gentlemen after midnight; and when Lady Margaret had told how her maid, in the flush of triumph, had disclaimed the idea of any relations with "such trumpery" as the native footman, the party broke up. Lord Bellman went out with Lugard "for the cigar;" and Diana, bright as was the morning, came up all smiles to Mr. Bligh.

"I am sure," she said, "you thought I behaved infamously last night. I know you did."

Bligh, whose eyes were following his lordship and Lugard a little abstractedly as they walked on the lawn, turned to her absently :

"How?" he said, with genuine surprise. "O, I remember! Dear, no!"

"But you should have tried again. I was looking for you at the end of the night; but you'd gone away in a huff, I am sure."

"I assure you, no," said he laughing, and with an earnestness that showed truth. "I went to the smoking-room, and had a cigar with one of the officers. They were telling some rather funny stories, and I am ashamed to say how late we stayed."

Now, considering the amount of capital this little heroine had expended last night and on the present morning in a sort of remorse, and resolution to make *amende* and soothe the wounded soul of the man she had treated so cruelly, this reception came on her a little unwelcome. She said nothing, and in a moment was called away.

Lunch came round, following at a very close interval on the heels of breakfast. Instead of "Come and stay a few days with me," your country-house host should surely write, "Come and *eat* a few days with me." Lunch is a poor mongrel meal, which is not the cheerful herald of a day's work, like the brighter breakfast, nor the pleasant finish, as the great state-dinner that day. It was of extra splendour. There was a place vacant for some time; no one remarked it, for there were many dining—the officers, and Captain Gilpin, the diverting pantomimist, who had secretly brought a small bag, which contained his stage-dress and properties. His brethren told everyone that Gilpin would kill them with laughing.

Mr. Pratt had been asked; and the Garibaldian, having long since taken the measure of the young lord, and seen that any matrimonial minings or borings were simply idle, had turned her attention to the young officer Lugard, whose spirits and offhand manner she liked.

With the young ladies who belong to the corps we have called Garibaldians there is one rule: never to be idle, but to engage the best that is available. Thus the warfare goes on; and as Chimeleigh was out of the question, Lugard came next, and would do till something better offered. This excellent economy of labour and time would have its fruits. Besides, as she told Diana, she began to feel a sort of *sentiment* towards this gallant and ready young man; and Diana was delighted to portion off Mr. Dick with her friend. She laughed as she did so, and affected to think he would be pleased. He looked "black" at this ill-usage; but it did not make much difference, for he contrived to sit very near her. He was in great spirits, and great good-humour with himself. In truth, he had noticed Bligh's absence.

"We shall have some fun to-night," he said. "I made Gilpin put up his tom-fool's dress to do the blind man. I don't understand how any man can stand up in the middle of a room and buffoon; but that's *his* concern. It makes me laugh, and is very good of its kind."

"Goodness me," said Diana with a start, "how odd! Where's Robert Bligh? I wonder has anything happened?"

"Why, do you mean to say," said Dick with scorn, "that he was expected, and that he has not sent?"

"O, I am sure," Diana said with a face of concern, "something important has happened. I know him so well."

"Yes," said Dick, "some wretched two-guinea brief has tumbled in. At the Bar, you know, they get so greedy. They sacrifice everything, and would kiss the very coat-tail of an attorney. Our friend, you must know, has a very wary eye to the pounds. I remember his saving ways at school. We used to call him Doctor Syntax, you know."

"O, here he is!" said Miss Diana, half rising in her excitement. "I knew he would come."

Miss Diana, indeed, had always an absent idol—a curious little perverseness, which sent her young mind off from what was present to what was away, or was to come.

Dick looked black again. Bligh stole softly into his place; it was exactly opposite Diana.

"I am so sorry," he said, "but I was kept. Some people from Calthorpe came in, and I could not get rid of them. I tried all I could."

"Everyone has been talking of you, my friend," said Dick. "When there is a dinner-party in the case, all other things give place, you know—even briefs. But what do you say to Miss Diana only having missed you a minute ago?"

"I am so glad of that," said Bligh calmly; "so I am just in time, you see."

"What do you do with all your fees," said Diana, "and making such a quantity of money?"

"This was not law-business," said he.

"So much the worse," said Lugard, with a loud laugh. "It was settled before you came in, that that was your only excuse."

"And what was it, then?" said Diana.

"O, some business," said Bligh, "which—"

"O, a mystery!" said Lugard. "Our friend is so close and guarded—he won't commit himself. We must beg his pardon for asking."

"I meant no harm," said Diana with a sort of serious penitence.

"I make no mystery," said Bligh laughing, "and there is no harm in it. It was simply a deputation from Calthorpe."

"A deputation!" repeated Lugard, laying down his knife and fork. "What on earth about?"

Mr. Lugard senior, not very far away, had caught the words, and looked on eagerly.

"So curious a thing," went on Bligh; "and I am sure you will laugh. But I have almost made up my mind. Richard, you won't like it, I am afraid."

"You are getting a way of talking like a sphinx."

"Well, I found our little place quite filled up; two gigs at the door, and the drawing-room full of large men. Prosser, the saddler—"

"Why, you don't mean to say they came to you about the election?"

"Exactly," said Bligh. "Wasn't it curious, after our talk this morning? They had heard all about the present man's sickness; and Prosser, who is the leading politician—"

"A flaming Radical," said Lugard, growing excited; "nice sort to come to a gentleman. I'd have kicked the dirty fellows out of my room."

"Yes, he is a Radical; but we talked things over, and I found his opinions were nearer mine than I supposed. We have all a sort of philosophic Radicalism, which can stretch, and do very well."

"And you—what did you do?"

"Well, I hesitated a long time; but they were so pressing, and showed me so much the almost certainty of the thing—"

"That you gave in! 'Pon my word, these are nice surprises! We never know what will happen before going to bed. He's very clever, isn't he? always planning something in this secret way."

"There was nothing secret about it," said Bligh laughing. "It was as much a surprise to me as to anyone."

Miss Diana was listening with great interest. For the power of getting on in the world she had the deepest respect and awe. Here was a fresh move in the game.

"How delightful!" she cried; "wouldn't it be amusing, a regular election; or," she added, laughing, "a contest *between you two*? How funny it would be!"

"And let the best man win," said Bligh with interest. "It *would* be exciting. The Army against the Bar."

Diana had turned grave.

"No, I hope not. There must be nothing of the kind. What would *we* do? no, no." She saw Dick's eyes glaring about, and fixed at times on Bligh with a very wild and fierce expression.

He hardly spoke for the rest of dinner, or affected to talk very earnestly to his companion the Garibaldian, who was quite pleased with the impression she had made. Though the regular army was not in sight, this skirmishing kept her hand in.

At last the ladies retired, and Mr. Gay called to those far off to close up. He had hardly settled himself comfortably, and thrown an eye down the table, when Lugard, who had moved up close, said very loudly,

"Here's a piece of news brought in during dinner. It seems Mr. Bligh here has been spending his day canvassing."

All started.

"Hallo, Master Bob!" cried Mr. Gay, "what's this?"

"Lugard means," said Bligh quietly, "that a number of the electors came to ask me to stand—"

"Quite unsolicited, of course," said Lugard, with a toss of his head.

"Quite. They were there some hours. They went over all the chances, and certainly made out a very enticing case."

"But, my good friend," said Mr. Gay gravely, "what are you talking of? Who are they—publicans or potwallopers?"

"No; Prosser, you know—"

"What, Prosser!" said Lord Bellman starting. "Why, he's for me; at least, they told me so. I declare, I don't understand."

His lordship was put out, Mr. Gay looked vexed, and Richard triumphant. Bligh put himself together as though he was going to address a throng.

"I must explain," he said. "Lord Bellman will understand that as yet I have been quite passive in the matter. Though," he added, smiling, "after what passed this morning, I think I am perfectly free."

"O, quite so, quite so," said his lordship.

"I think that's all fair," added Mr. Gay relieved.

"Well," went on Robert, "they told me candidly, that as far as Lord Chimeleigh went they were quite content, and that Lord Bellman being lord of the soil, and all that, they would not like to go against him; but with any deputy, as Mr. Prosser remarked, it would be a different matter."

"How handsome!" broke out Lugard loudly; "how condescending! Lord Bellman ought to be grateful. Do you know what this fellow Prosser is, whom Mr. Bligh has taken up? A low blackguard of a Radical, a pothouse politician, that I wouldn't leave in the room with a half-crown on the chimney-piece. That's what he is. I must congratulate Mr. Robert Bligh on the new friends and allies he has picked up."

There was something so vehement in this speech that everyone looked with some wonder at the speaker. Mr. Lugard *père* said quietly across the table, "What are you talking of—about allies and friends? Take the thing quietly, my dear boy. Keep that for the men. Prosser is a shrewd, long-headed fellow, and our knowing friend Bligh was quite right to make up to him."

"I never had a communication with him before to-day," replied Bligh quietly.

"Ah, but mamma had," said Mr. Lugard, showing *all* his white teeth; "your clever mother, she knows how to do this."

"I know nothing of it, and my conviction is—" but he stopped; for it flashed on him that what Mr. Lugard had said explained it.

"Yes, I am quite right," said the other triumphantly. "But it was very well done."

"Very well done!" said his son in the same excited tone—"to

take up principles of that sort! I should be ashamed to do it, and wouldn't for all the seats in the world. He says he is a philosophic Radical. I don't understand these refinements."

"O, it will soon be generally understood. I mean an educated Radical—educated morally and intellectually. All that is wanting is self-restraint. If the lower class were well off and comfortable, and educated out of their violence and unreasonableness—which *is* what is *radical*—there would be nothing to be afraid of."

"I suppose you'd sit down with them to this table?"

"Certainly," said Bligh, "under those conditions."

"And this is the stuff you and Mr. Prosser were talking together?—'pon my word!"

"I am afraid the army is a poor school," said Mr. Lugard senior. "I must tell you, Richard, you are saying very foolish things. But if I may ask Mr. Bligh, what is he going to do?"

"Well," said Bligh with a sort of confidence, "we have not quite decided; but, really, I am thinking of trying it. I know I shall fail; but as my friend and adviser the queen's counsel says—the next best thing to being elected is having been a candidate. It is everything to a barrister. As Lord Bellman was kind enough to speak to me about it, and gave me a sort of offer, I expressly said to them, if Lord Chimeleigh was in the case, I should not move in the matter."

"Well, I must say that is all fair and aboveboard, Mr. Bligh. We must talk this over together, and make out something.—What about the drag-hunt, Gay—what is the hour? How is D'Orsay?" And as it was plain his lordship wished to change the subject, the whole company, except Richard, were presently riding away over the course—now on the back of D'Orsay, now on the other noble animal—inspecting this jump and that; and Mr. Pratt, who had been silent as the grave during the dinner, suddenly had his jaws relaxed, and became fluent.

In the drawing-room, when the "gentlemen joined the ladies," there was a pleasant excitement. In that bright realm, in the soft light, Diana was fluttering with an air of mystery—a bright creature, indeed, herself. Something was coming. Captain Gilpin was missing. She was looking to the door. Presently it was opened by Mr. Chewton, who on occasion would graciously lend himself to undignified offices, and who announced, in his best professional way, "Mr. Slapbang." To the amazement of the beholders, the wonder, surprise, and delight of the assembled thousands, as the *Mercury* would have said, a sort of mendicant or beggar-man entered, all rags, all patches, with an old hat without a crown, and a couple of long straps covered with knives. This stranger entered quite coolly, and standing in the middle of the room, began quite coolly a sort of chant, "Buy my knives! Who'll buy, who'll buy! Knives to grind!—razors to grind!"—in short, convulsing every spectator. The Garibaldian said later, "she was

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very seldom.”

“Very well then,” said

shrieking with laughter," especially when the inimitable humourist went round to the ladies, and asked *them* for a razor to grind. Diana, to whom he made this proposal first, looked a little grave. This was the whole performance; yet he kept it up, on such material, for more than half an hour, until Mr. Gay, with his arm round Diana, said in a half-whisper,

"I think, doatsey, we've had enough of the knife-grinder."

What a thing is *esprit de corps*—a synonyme, surely, for charity and love! The delight and admiration and pride of his brother officers was something to see. They looked not at him, but at the other faces, to see how they were affected. They grinned—"Buckstone," or "the Funny Blake" of the music-halls, whom they placed higher than Buckstone, was nothing to this—all, except Lugard, who kept apart, and glowered and "pished" at it, and said it made him sick. But he was out of humour;—and waiting for an opportunity, when he had retired, and everybody was saying how funny it was, and how "clever" it was, Lugard came up to Bligh, and said,

"Come down and have a turn at the billiards."

Bligh said with surprise, "Billiards! My dear Richard, not now, surely. We should have gone after dinner."

"Well, you needn't play. Come down; I want to speak to you."

They went down, Bligh wondering. They went outside on the terrace, and then Lugard suddenly turned, and placed himself in front of him. Bligh saw that he was excited—his eyes "savage," his cheeks flushed.

"Now, then," he said, "what does all this mean?—what are you coming to? I must know, and know it here too, before you leave this place!"

"O, this is mere absurdity," said the other impatiently. "I am getting tired of it! Let us go back, and talk of this in the morning."

"Yes," said the other scornfully, "when you will have time to get up your lawyer-like schemes, and plot something else. I am tired of it, and sick of it. You have laid yourself out to scheme against me, with all those little tricks in which you are so skilful."

"I have no tricks, Lugard," said the other quietly; "you never made a greater mistake. The way you go on to me—and have always gone on—really seems the result of some morbid delusion. Only for that—"

"Yes, only for *that*! Go on; finish, please."

"No, not this time," said the other impatiently. "I won't give you that opening. I am afraid you want to pick a quarrel with me. And if you only think a moment, *that* won't benefit you in the least; for you must see that, if I took a real enmity to you, my tricks, as you call them, would be doubly dangerous."

"Then I'll match you, tricks and all, as sure as my name is Richard Lugard. And I tell you, you don't leave this to-night, until I hear

from you what you mean—what you are doing here in this house, and what wretched scheme you had—”

“About what?”

“About me—about *her*! Now, don’t attempt it; it won’t do. You’ll find I’m a man not to be played with. I’ve a demon in me that will come out one of these days, and won’t stick at a trifle.”

“There is no need for all this,” said Bligh. “Now you are reasonable, or more reasonable; and I see what you want. As for threatening me, you know that is absurd. But you wish to know my *scheme*. Is it about the election? Very well; I must go on with that. I wish to rise in the world, and can’t afford to lose such a chance; there. What else?”

“You cold, crafty fellow! That’s it, is it? Then you won’t, if I can hinder you—if I was to beggar myself and my father both!”

“Fair again—quite fair. There’s an honest and straightforward principle—”

“Don’t give me your sneering speeches, I don’t want them. And what do you mean about *her*—Diana?”

“Ah! *that’s* another affair. You can’t expect me to be so candid in that. But I may tell you this: I do admire her, and always have done so; though I should never dream that she would think a poor plodding lawyer worthy of her.”

“He will send me mad!” said Lugard, stamping with rage. “Never mind; if I were to live for nothing else, I will live to defeat you here. What insufferable airs! You have laid yourself out for all this! But I shall lay myself out too. Mind, I give you warning; expect nothing from me. I shall stop at nothing with such a—”

“With all my heart,” said Bligh; “then that’s understood, and I am glad of it. You might have made me a warm friend, and I would not *then* have wished to stand in your way. But you have always,” added Bligh, a little excitedly, “behaved to me so unkindly and ungraciously—as if you had a sort of hatred to me—that I am glad it has come to this. I shall make no more efforts at conciliating you, but just go on in my own course, as if you were not in the world.”

“Then don’t carry that too far,” said Lugard, in a low suppressed voice; “I warn you. I can’t trust myself—”

“Why, where on earth—” said a sweet voice, “are you talking of the law and the prophets? Come back to the drawing-room, I beg. It is not decent to our little hostess. And young men are scarce.”

This was Mr. Lugard *père*.

“Go, Bligh, at once, like a good fellow, and don’t lose time.”

Bligh went away hastily. Mr. Lugard waited till he was gone; then the sweet voice changed.

“You fool!” he said; “you great, ill-conditioned, helpless fool! Is

this the way you mean to get on in the world? Have you no sense or brains, you vulgar-minded fellow?"

"It's no use talking to me that way," said Dick; "I have to bear enough without that."

"Then bear it, and get on by yourself. I see nothing is to be made of you. You have no delicacy, no tact. Why, that man's little finger has more wit in it than your whole twelve stone."

"Because he schemes and plots."

"And why don't *you*? But you can't. A clodhopper or a bumpkin would do more. Picking a vulgar quarrel here! Good God! But it's useless teaching you. I tell you what now, Mr. Richard, you must look after yourself. I've spent too much money on you, teaching you, as it is; and now I'm not going to pinch myself, in my middle-age, to support you. You are as helpless now as you were at the school, when that fellow disgraced you publicly."

"I haven't forgotten *that* day yet, long ago as it is. I'll beat him yet, and get interest from him too."

"Well, do so; it's your own affair. But, in God's name, don't take that vulgar way of violence and losing your temper. You can't imagine the childish figure it makes you cut. If you'll let me give you one bit of advice—and if you are sensible, you'll take it—your hands are too coarse for this delicate work; you haven't the neatness of touch for an affair of this kind. That other girl—that iron-master's daughter—I think would do for you better. And you *might* have a chance there. She is coarse enough, God knows! But it's all plain sailing; and I could help you there with the old father. But how do you mean to beat him, pray?"

"Why, at this election. If I have to sell my commission, I'll oppose him."

"And come on me afterwards. By God, you shan't, sir! Do as you like, though; but mind, I warn you. If I could advise you, I would work that lord still. But no matter. And as for the girl—"

"I'll beat him there too."

"And a fine way you're going about it! Get back to the drawing-room, and lose no time. I daresay the fellow has scored a point or two in your absence. God help us! a man like you—in a cavalry-regiment—and to be spoon-feeding you in this way!"

Both gentlemen came back to the drawing-room; Mr. Lugard *père* looking as sweet and placid as if he had just gone to his room—as he said he had, for a handkerchief. Richard, as he entered, saw that Bligh was indeed scoring a few more points. The little lady of the house saw his restless eyes, and her almost mischievous heart was pleased. She was very young, and this sort of game, new to her, seemed the most exciting and amusing thing in the world. These were such happy days for her, she thought; and to this night she used to look back as one of the happiest. Her father came up to her.

"Do you know where I have been, popsicums?—taking a sly look at D'Orsay. He is in grand fettle. How will you lay out your money? I am going to put another fifty to it. How will you lay it out? All I ask is a little out of it; a picture for old papsy—coloured, to hang in his room, when he gets past his work, and you are married. I see that's not far off."

"Years, you foolish man; a great many years."

"O, I see, miss!" with one of his loud enjoying laughs. "Listen to this, Lord Bellman. She has some hearts to crack yet, before she goes into harness! A nice plan she is laying out! Never mind."

"And the picture, dear," she whispered; "why didn't you tell me to-day? To-morrow I will drive into Irnston, and I'll sit to the man there."

"Ah, witch, witch!" said he, looking at her with inexpressible fondness. "How she thinks of her old man!" Many afterwards remembered this picture of the fond father and his daughter.



AFTER THE BATTLE

THE wistful hound creeps, list'ning, to the door ;
The favourite steed stands idle in the stall ;
The wild-fowl, fearless, flutter on the moor ;
The old retainers linger in the hall :
O, will he never, never rise again,
To look upon them all ?

They brought him in with blood upon his face ;
They told how they had found him in the field,
Where the dead foe lay thickest in the place,
With tatter'd colours grasp'd, and shiver'd shield,
Lying face downward on the blood-soak'd plain,
'Midst those who would not yield.

He does not know our faces as we stand
About his bed, watching each fitful breath ;
In his delirium, as with sword in hand,
" Freedom," he cries, " in England or in death !"
Then with a hoarse shout, lifting his hot head,
" The day is ours !" he saith.

So through long nights and days that bring no change,
Or change but from wild hopes to wilder fears,
And still our faces are all dark and strange
To him ; and the long nights of pain seem years
In their duration ; and we watch him now
Through a thick mist of tears.

And still the hound creeps, wistful, to the door ;
And still the steed stands idle in the stall ;
The fearless wild-fowl flutter o'er the moor ;
The broad notch'd sword hangs rusting on the wall ;
And he, O God, may never rise again,
To look upon them all !

M. E. BRADDON.



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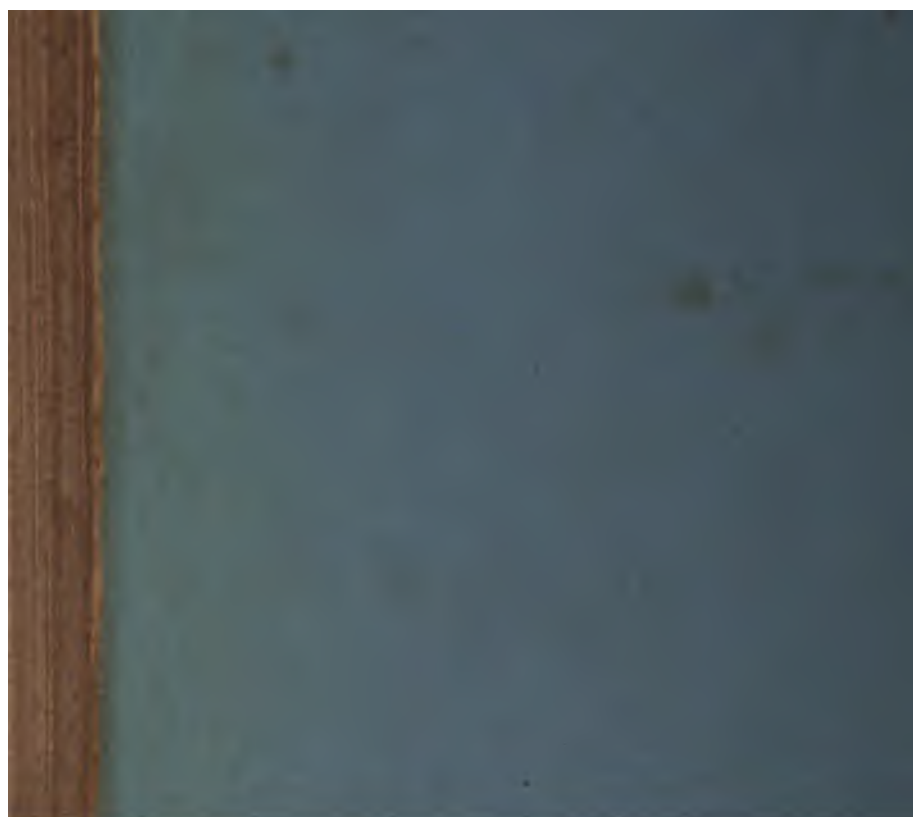
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